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[THE MYSTERY.]

EMERALD AND RUBY, WITH A DIAMOND HEART.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Golden Apple," "Miss Arlingcourt's Will," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VII.

It cannot be denied that Laurence Lermont took his peep into that brilliant parlour that evening, and scanned, with curious eye and keen interest, the fair faces and graceful forms that flitted past. Which belonged to the veiled lady of his morning's adventure? It almost seemed to him that he must recognise her. Once, at sound of a low and silvery voice, he turned eagerly. It came from a group of four near the piano. A stately, distinguished-looking gentleman of middle age; a mild-eyed, aristocratic but very sweet-faced woman; and two young girls, as different in appearance as the rose and lily, or night and morning.

Which had spoken? Laurence was almost positive that it was the same voice which had so powerfully appealed to his sympathy. He watched them closely. It was evidently a wealthy and influential coterie, for the remainder of the company gave them the most respectful greeting and watchful attention.

She that was so fair and pure-looking of the young ladies seemed to be either indisposed or out of health, for he could see that the gentleman and the sweet-faced woman watched her narrowly, and with the tenderest solicitude. But the other, the sparkling brunette, was the very embodiment of brilliant gaiety and exuberant life. In a little while she was surrounded by an admiring group of gentlemen, and presently was coaxed to the piano, where she executed a *morceau* which the dullest listener must have known was from a rare and difficult opera with the utmost ease and grace.

"What a splendid pianist Miss Ackland must be!" observed a lady standing beside Laurence to the stout gentleman on whose arm she leaned.

"Ah, indeed, is that the Miss Ackland about whom Bob was raving? She is a brilliant creature certainly, and one can't be so hard on the young scamp." "But she's not half so charming to my mind as Maude, sweet Maude Kyrle, her cousin," continued the lady, *sotto voce*, but with such eagerness that she raised it, unconsciously, just enough to reach Laurence. "That is Miss Kyrle, who was just seated on the *tête-à-tête*. She is the great heiress, you know, and that is Mr. Kyrle standing over her. You will always find him hovering about her. He's as fond as a lover, and keeps jealous guard over his treasure."

"The pale little creature, with those soft brown eyes, is that Miss Kyrle?"

"Yes; she is not usually so pale and still. But they told me she was taken ill yesterday very suddenly, and they were intensely alarmed about her. She has only left her chamber this evening, and I heard her aunt say she was to stay but an hour. She usually is joyousness and brightness itself, though in a different fashion from Miss Ackland. I don't know why, but there is something about the latter that impresses me unfavourably. Her eyes have an evil look hid away in them. I don't want Bob to commit himself. Besides, as I understand it, the girl has nothing of her own. This Mr. Kyrle gives her everything."

"An excellent reason, sagacious mamma, why Bob should steer clear of the lady," laughed the gentleman. And then the pair moved on.

Laurence Lermont looked over to the group with keener interest, yet somehow with a pang of disappointment. The great heiress had been ill, and only left her chamber that evening. Then it could not be she! How absurd it was in him to think it. Miss Kyrle, the petted idol of a colossal fortune, the darling of that proud old man's heart!—as if she could have need to call upon a stranger, in such strange fashion, for his help.

He laughed the idea to scorn, and turned abruptly and left the brilliant apartment, and went out, and strolled down to the shore, and came back glowing with exercise, and tired enough to fling himself upon

the couch without delay. And in the morning he was up early, and, with pencil and paper and his rule, was on the cliff when the first rosy sunbeam kissed away its cold, gray shadows. His little diagram was soon drawn, and then he fell to watching the path that wound down to the beach. He saw her when she first came to view on the headland above, and he saw likewise a second female figure keeping in the rear. But the latter turned away, and was concealed by the rocks, while the other came steadily down to the cliff.

"You are prompt to your appointment, sir," said the same musical voice. "I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your kindness and your generosity. I hope some time we may meet again, and that I may be able to return something towards the debt I owe you. Until then I shall rely fearlessly upon your good faith in keeping my secret."

There was a plaintive appeal in the voice which touched him deeply, and roused a chivalrous longing to pledge himself to her service.

"You may trust me, madam, without question. Nor need you disturb yourself by any feeling of obligation," he said, eagerly, but in a tone of the utmost respect, as he gave her the paper. "More than this, if at any time you should require this box, and find yourself in a situation where it is impossible for you to come hither, a note to my address will put me at your service again. I will unearth it, and bring it to any locality you may designate."

She took the card he extended, and held it hesitatingly a moment, and once more the young man took notice of the peculiar ring, the flower stalk of tiny emeralds, and the ruby blossom with its diamond heart.

"Laurence Lermont," repeated the lady, "I shall remember it as the name of a true knight and honourable. It seems churlish in me, perhaps, to receive all this confidence, and give nothing—not even my name—in return. But believe me, it is better, far better. Yet stay—at least I may offer you a slight memento of this mysterious adventure of yours. You shall have something to prove your identity as my benefactor."

She drew hastily from her chateleine a massive gold ring, elaborately chased, and holding an exquisitely cut cameo—a ring too unwieldy, evidently, for those slender fingers of hers, for it had been fastened into the bunch of charms dangling from her watch chain.

He bowed low while he took it.

"I should not forget it, though I had no memento. Yet I thank you heartily for a tangible proof of its actual occurrence. I should not forget it, or you."

"You would not know me? You cannot be able to recognise me?" exclaimed she, in consternation, pulling a fold of the veil closer still.

He smiled.

"No, I do not think I could. Moreover, if you do not wish it, I shall not try. And yet you will always have a very vivid identity in my mind, though I must call upon my imagination to give you face to me."

"Which is the best. And now I must go. Farewell!"

She pulled the veil yet closer, and turned slowly.

"Farewell!" returned Laurence, and there was a passion in his voice which he had not fairly realised, and so could not guard against its betrayal.

She turned and looked at him sharply. A low sigh floated out from the depths of the veil, and then a sort of sparkle must have come, for her voice rose, as such sweet tones only come over smiling lips:

"Perhaps kind fate will decree that we meet again. I shall know you, Mr. Lermont, always, and readily; but you—yes, you, I am sure, will never suspect my identity."

His eye, half unconsciously, dropped down to the white hand, where that singular ring blazed in the light with emerald and ruby and diamond fire.

"My ring!" exclaimed she. "No, no, you shall not know me by that."

And she drew it off hastily.

"I have yielded to you the slight clue I possessed," he returned, not without chagrin. "So you have me completely at your mercy."

"I shall be lenient, if only it is possible," she answered, and a sigh finished.

Without another word, she turned and walked away. Laurence strolled down to the beach, feeling as if he had opened a book rich with illuminations, and enticing with fairy legends, and it had been rudely and abruptly snatched from his hands.

He came upon the second figure down among the rocks. If he was not mistaken, it was the brilliant Miss Ackland. At all events, he caught a flash of keen enquiry from a pair of black eyes beneath the rich lace veil which shaded her jaunty hat. But she passed on swiftly, and threaded the circuitous path that led back to the hotel. Laurence just missed the discovery of a portion of Andrew Courtney's treachery when he went down to the public table to dinner. The old lady, Madame Van Dorn, was just coming out. She saw him, recognised him, and beckoned eagerly, which, of course, drew the attention of half the company to the young gentleman, who most reluctantly came forward.

"So you have not gone? I am very glad. The landlord gave me to understand that I should not see you. I wanted to say to you how thankful I am that among the rapid, graceless young men of the present day, there are still left a few to remind me of the chivalrous, old-time gentleman."

Laurence stood colouring with embarrassment under the levelled eyes of the crowded table.

"I am afraid you do me too much honour," he stammered. "I do not feel myself deserving of any extra praise."

"I wanted to give you some proof of the sincerity of my gratitude—a—"

"Nay," he interrupted, "do not speak of it, I beg of you. I should never consent to accept anything."

And without further parley, he hurried away and took a seat at the lower end of the table.

The old lady looked puzzled.

"I like him the better for an independent spirit," she muttered; "but—why the landlord said he frankly accepted my payment of his expenses here! Well, well, perhaps his objection is to receiving anything more. I'm sure he's a nice young man. His face gives that assurance."

And she dismissed the subject from her mind.

Laurence paid his bill, and the landlord had no suspicion of the mistake which had been made. The letter, too, remained safely hidden in the drawer of the table in Room 62. The only thing he carried away, as a tangible memento of his seaside visit, was the cameo ring. But a visionary romance filled his thoughts, and all unconsciously to himself he had imbued the unknown lady with the mysterious charms of a fairy princess.

The work-day routine of his life taken up again did not disturb this sentiment, as he had been half afraid it would, but rather it was glorified, and

brightened by the vivid colouring thrown across its dulness. He hung the cameo ring upon the book of his little bronze watch-stand, and, for his eyes at least, it was the brightest spot and the chief focus of attraction in the room, which did not lack a certain tasteful air, for all the simplicity and frugality of its furnishings.

A room indeed somewhat different from the disordered quarters of other young bachelors of his circumstances, and neat as a lady's boudoir, though a woman's hand so seldom attended to its needs. A southerly room, where the rich sunshine filtered golden streams all the short winter day, and in the summer soft zephyrs crept lovingly through the boughs of a mammoth elm, whose trunk stood fifty feet away from the nearest corner of the house, but whose outspreading branches dropped their leaves upon the roof. And, as southern windows should, these held tiny pots of flowers, and at one a vigorous ivy had framed the casement more charmingly than artist hands could do. Then there were a few pictures, nothing costly or wonderful, but with a bright and refined look about them. And the mantel, and the table, and the wall held pretty trifles—a moss-garnished twig with a humming-bird's fairy nest, so marvelously fitted to the bend that till you took a second look you could not believe it anything but a tiny tuft of moss grown over the wood; a spray of gorgeous autumnal leaves varnished, and thus preserved in beauty the whole year through; curious bits of sparkling stone hammered off some rare rock, and brought as a trophy of his wanderings; a glass case with its assorted treasure of birds' eggs of all home varieties.

A host of such charming, inexpensive, but yet rare curiosities, were stowed upon the shelves which nearly filled in one side of the room. It was that corner which held his instruments, his mounted compass, the bunch of wire stakes, with the gay scarlet flags attached, and the simple apparatus by which he earned his livelihood.

It was not owing to the proprietor, however, that the roomy old chamber kept its dainty look. That was altogether the affair of Leo.

Leo was Mr. Lermont's valet, head clerk, chambermaid, and steward in one, a rather slender-looking boy of thirteen years now, and who believed in the very depths of his honest heart that there had never before, and would never again, live so noble, wise, and generous-hearted a man as young Laurence Lermont. Certain it is, seldom had master so loyal and devoted a servant as Leo.

The lad's history had its pathetic story, and he never forgot how they two had first met. It had been in a time of horror—at a frightful railroad accident, which had precipitated a crowded train of carriages down a steep embankment into a deep river.

Poor little Leo had crept forth from the debris, guided by his sister's wailing voice, but had left his father behind, a mangled corpse, which could not be extricated from the terrible mass of broken carriages, crushed locomotive, and engulfing water.

Laurence Lermont, who had rushed to the rescue, himself fortunately in the one first-class carriage which had escaped injury, discovered the brave little fellow keeping afloat, and dexterously dodging the floating fragments, while he gave such assistance as was possible to his sister, a girl two years older, but helpless as a babe in this frightful emergency.

It was but the work of a few moments for his powerful arm and ready will to bring them safely to shore, where the girl fell down senseless, and was taken in hand by a bright-eyed, resolute-faced woman, who had shared his own safety in the first-class carriage.

"You will come and see what can be done for father?" implored the boy, laying his trembling hand on his preserver's arm.

"To be sure. Where is he?" was the prompt reply.

But when the lad pointed to the spot, Laurence shook his head sadly.

"My poor boy! there is no help for what is there."

The lad flung himself down with a wild wail.

"Oh! what will become of us—what will become of Bertha and me? Father is dead, and we have no money! And we are in a strange land!" he cried, in broken English.

The tender-hearted Laurence took the boy to be comforted by his sister, but the abject terror and grief of the two helpless creatures as they clung together was harrowing in the extreme. Their simple story was too earnestly told to be false. They had all come from Germany, intending to sail in an emigrant ship from Liverpool, and the mother had sickened and died soon after landing. The friends they expected to find were gone, none could tell whither. What money they had brought with them was speedily exhausted by the mother's sickness and the unexpected expenses of their own living. The poor discouraged

father had found work in a Lancashire town, and had set forth to obtain it. And now he was suddenly taken from them, and the two helpless creatures looked around them piteously, asking what they should do.

The same bright-eyed, resolute-faced woman who had devoted herself to Bertha, spoke suddenly, when there was an anxious and hasty deliberation among the group of sympathising bystanders as to what should be done with the pair.

"I can dispose of one. I will take the girl myself. I will endeavour to be such a friend as her forlorn situation needs," she said, quietly, but with a tone of voice that revealed how the subject had been fairly weighed in her mind.

The girl flung her arms around the lady's neck in a passion of gratitude.

Laurence saw the poor lad's face blanch and his lip quiver, and was deeply touched to find that the little hero refrained from a single word of expostulation at this desertion. A quick and generous impulse sent him to Leo's side, and made him clasp the sturdy little hand in his.

"And I, my boy, will give you half of what comes to me. I think we will manage to be very comfortable."

And Leo was his devoted follower from that hour.

The lady and Laurence had agreed to exchange addresses, that the brother and sister might be able to keep up a constant correspondence and knowledge of each other's welfare, but in the hurry of a sudden parting it had been neglected.

It was Leo's one grief that all their efforts failed to discover his sister's home, and, as he had hinted, never was there more faithful and tender service than this little German waif gave in return for his benefactor's kindness. At first it was not so much he was able to do, beyond accompanying Laurence as flag-boy when he tramped off upon his surveying duties, but he presently developed a rare faculty of womanliness, if one might call it so. He was neat-handed and dexterous, and he watched with untiring zeal for any indication of his friend's thoughts or wishes, and made ready and kept cheery and bright the home they found, however brief its occupancy, until Laurence, though vaguely understanding all his worth, yet knew it was as impossible for him to think of parting with Leo as with sunshine and warmth.

The lad's face brightened indeed, as if now, for the first time, the sun that day was shining, when Laurence entered the room on his return from the seaside.

"Oh, Mr. Laurence, you are back again?"

"Yes, Leo, here I am, safe and sound. How are you, my boy? At your lessons, I see. That is right. I expect I shall be astonished at your progress. Shouldn't be surprised if you had taken business out of my hands."

Leo's face was all sparkle.

"And you are better. I can see it. You are not so pale nor so heavy-eyed. I am so glad!"

"Yes, I am all right again, ready for work, which I shall need to make up for this little indulgence. They don't know anything about the snug little meals you and I get up, Leo, down at these seaside hotels, and they charge what I must survey a week to earn. How is it, Leo—any jobs on hand?"

"Yes, sir. Squire Jackson has sold the meadow farm, and wants you to come and survey it as soon as you can. And Mrs. Worth is selling the road through her moving; and there's the cemetery job, besides. We'll soon earn the money back, sir. I'm so glad you're better."

"I know you are, my boy. You're as good as a mother for worrying over and petting me, Leo. Well, we'll look after the squire's lot first, bright and early to-morrow. I imagine we shall be kept busy. The company is going to work in earnest. I met the agent just now, and he spoke to me about it. You see, I was shrewd in coming down to a growing place like this, eh, Leo? although you half wanted me to take the other railroad job. There's time enough for us to take such a tramp when you are older. Now you need all the schooling you can get."

"You are too good to me, Mr. Laurence," answered the lad, his eyes moistening.

"Any letters?" asked Laurence, moving up to the table and casting a hasty glance over the orderly arrangement there.

"No, sir; only the one which came the day you went away."

"Well, where is that?"

"Why, I sent it, as you told me, to the hotel. Didn't you get it?"

"No; I did not get any letter at all."

"Oh! I am so sorry. Somehow I had such hopes of that letter. I couldn't help believing it was something splendid for you. I wrote it just as you left the address. You must send and get it back."

"I haven't an idea what it could want. Where was the post-mark?"

"From the city, sir; and such a peculiar handwriting. Oh! you mustn't lose that letter, Mr. Laurence. Please send for it. I am sure it had good fortune."

"What, Leo, have you turned dreamer for me as well as for yourself? Foolish fellow! I verily believe you expect to be summoned some time to some wonderful German palace. Haven't I told you the best palaces come of our own building? And good fortune is not apt to be sealed up in letters."

The boy hung his head, his ingenuous face over-weighed with a fine blush.

It was true enough. Leo was a dreamer, and fed his mind with wonderful visions and fair prophecies. Dimly in his memory there lingered the stories his mother's sweet voice had told of a former German home of noble and wealthy ancestry, and it would not have startled or surprised him in the least if at length a letter had come summoning Bertha and him to a royal fortune. It always sent a peculiar thrill through the lad's sensitive nerves when the postman arrived; and somehow the broad envelopes, with their dirty stamping, always appeared to him like the fairy nutshell whose breaking would reveal the magic gifts of fortune.

"Oh, no," he repeated, earnestly. "Mr. Laurence, you must never lose that letter. Who knows, but it might prove the stepping-stone to fortune?"

Laurence Lermont laughed lightly.

"At least, we will send. I will write to the landlord to send it back. And now, then, let me look at your lessons."

"I guess Miss Clemmens is coming!" said Leo, smiling a little mischievously. "She's just found out you are at home, sir!"

Laurence laughed also, though he shrugged his shoulders.

"Then I must submit, I suppose, in patience to a half-hour's interruption. Oh, Leo! if it wasn't for Miss Clemmens's cheap rent, and the nice tea and muffins!"

Which had hardly escaped his lips, when there came a peculiar little rap, brisk and light, as from dainty fingers. The youthful proprietor, with a comical grimace, motioned for Leo to open the door, whereupon a thin, angular figure, and a small head, decorated with a very dressy lace cap, with fluttering pink ribbons, presented itself.

"Oh, Mr. Lermont, I am so relieved!" exclaimed a rather thin and wiry voice, and between the words the lady seemed to blow a little gasp or sob, as of some violently repressed emotion. "I came to say how exceedingly thankful I am that you are safely returned! Oh, yes—ah, yes!—oh!"

"Thank you, Miss Clemmens! I am sorry you have given yourself any uneasiness. It was quite unnecessary! Will you come in?"

"Come in? Oh, no, indeed—ah, no—oh! And are you sure you are recovered? You do not look so pale, but appearances are often deceitful—oh, yes!—ah, yes!—yes! Are you sure you are strong?"

"Never stronger in my life!" responded Laurence, taking up a book, and opening it rather nervously.

"But you are tired, I know!—oh, yes, I know you are tired—oh, yes—ah! I'll bring you a cup of hot tea. It will set you up again—ah, yes—ah!"

And away darted the pink ribbons and lace cap which crowned the spinster's locks, and they heard her swift steps pattering down stairs.

"Every nature has its weakness," said Laurence, philosophically; "but it is a shame Miss Clemmens should be quite so shallow when she is so kind-hearted, and, but for this over-attention, such a model landlady."

"She doesn't trouble poor old Boggs with her kindly attentions," said Leo, a roguish smile dancing across his face. "I think she exhausts all her interest at this chamber."

Laurence shook a finger at him.

"We must not have eyes to see, Leo. The poor creature is so kindly disposed, it is a shame in us to ridicule her queer ways. It would be very rude in me to refuse her tea, especially if she brings something very nice as accompaniment, and we must admit, taking her interjections and all, Miss Clemmens is a model cook—the very best you and I are likely to meet, and we ought to be flattered by her good will towards us."

There was time for no more, for with a pleasant little accompanying clink of silver spoon against ringing china, Miss Clemmens came upstairs again, and tip-toed into the room, bearing a tiny tray covered by an immaculate napkin. There was the cup of tea, certainly, steaming hot, and of just the right colour the young gentleman required. There also, as he foreboded, was a slight accompaniment. A roll, white as snow, and hardly yet cooled, flanked by toast muffins, crisp, and brown, and odorous.

"Miss Clemmens, you were never cut out for a

boarding mistress," exclaimed Laurence, quite unable to resist the genial glow on the thin, sharp face, if he had been stoical enough to have declined her treat. "Don't you know that you are quite spoiling us? that Leo and I shall never be able to tear ourselves away, and shall keep on living here, and being spoiled?"

"Oh, indeed, Mr. Lermont, if I don't find fault, I'm sure you needn't. As if I didn't appreciate kindly-disposed people, and quiet, respectable, well-bred lodgers. Oh, yes—ah, yes—oh!"

And the kindly look of the eye was pleasant, but not, however, that smirking, girlish smile which Laurence tried to ignore. She lingered while the muffins were discussed, pretending to busy herself dusting the mantle.

"And the letter which came. Did you give it to Mr. Lermont, Leo?"

"Yes, Miss Clemmens. And he never got it."

"How unfortunate. Oh, yes!—oh!"

"But I will send for it, since you put so much stress upon it," said Laurence. "Heaven knows I have need to look after all the good fortune that comes. Leo and I may have great expectations, but we are far short of Rothschilds now, and you plot, and contrive to ruin us for common fare, Miss Clemmens. I must beg you to have a care. You know once you appear with the tray, you are irresistible, and my resolution melts. I shall banish you until the next return home."

Miss Clemmens took up the tray, and laughed as she vanished, soliloquising as she went to lock up the tea and sugar caddy from the little maid-of-all-work.

"Hum! such a nice young gentleman, so sweet-spoken, and so handsome. Why shouldn't I look after his comfort. Oh, yes, why shouldn't I?—ah—oh!"

Laurence sent his letter to the hotel, and duly received an answer.

No letter of any sort remained now. If any came to his direction it should be forwarded.

Leo drew a long sigh as he heard this result.

"I am so sorry, Mr. Laurence, I can't help feeling that the letter held good fortune!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE poor hermit on the cliff received, as the compassionate neighbour had promised, a respectable burial, though there were no kinsfolk to follow behind the coffin, or to drop a tear upon the new sodded grave.

"More than respectable," said the woman, exultantly. "I only wish poor Jim could have seen it himself. For didn't you all notice that grand gentleman from the hotel? And how still and solemn-looking his face was! He seemed to feel an interest on account of the young lady's finding the poor fellow dying, I suppose."

Yes, Mr. Kyrle, the aristocratic and haughty gentleman, was there at the funeral of the humble and obscure recluse; a singular fact, except to those who were aware how deeply his daughter's interest had been excited by the wretched death of the lonely creature.

He followed the lowly train that wound back among the hills to the bleak churchyard. He lingered behind, even after the others had taken leave, and stood, in grave silence, watching the sexton's movements.

The latter was by no means ignorant of the rich gentleman's proximity, but he made no show of it, nor glanced in his direction, until, when the long ridge was nicely rounded off, he shouldered his spade, when the other spoke suddenly:

"Can you tell me if there will be a grave-stone of any sort?"

"I doubt if there will be, sir," replied the sexton, touching his hat respectfully. "You see, poor Jim fixed it so that his money in the bank should all go to the poor of the neighbourhood, and I reckon the funeral will swallow all his furniture brings. He never seemed to care for anything of the sort. He was queer, was Jim."

"Then I shall empower you to order a good stone for the grave, with the name and date, of course. Send the bills to the hotel for Arthur Kyrle; and bring your own, for your services in the matter, to the same place. Let no time be lost, for I shall remain but a short period, and I wish to come here and find the stone set."

And hardly had the last word escaped his lips ere he turned and walked away swiftly.

The sexton, leaning on the spade which he had planted for support during a prolonged conversation, looked after him meditatively.

"There's a queer cove! Paying out his money to fix up a grave as he knows nothing about, only because his pretty daughter found the man dying. What a mint he must have!"

And the sexton heaved a profound sigh, curiously compounded, of envy and satisfaction.

Mr. Kyrle, meantime, walked briskly on the path back towards the sea, with his arms folded and his eyes bent down, and a little dreary. When he reached the hotel road he turned aside, and walked backwards and forwards full half-an-hour longer. Then he went into the house, and up to his own suite of rooms.

Maude was sitting at the window in a great easy-chair, with a lacquered tray of pearl beads in her lap, and a coil of gilded wire hanging listlessly from her fingers. Beyond her, in the shade of a sweeping curtain, her lap filled with lace and ribbons, sat Miss Ackland, evidently entirely absorbed in her work, but every now and then she lifted her head, and cast a sharp, penetrating look over her companion's abstracted face.

"Alone, girls?" he said, cheerfully, "and as still as a pair of mice. I could not believe the room was occupied. Where is Aunt Elise?"

"In her chamber, reading. You have been gone a long time, papa," answered his daughter.

Mr. Kyrle came to the chair, leaned down, and touched his lips to her fair brow.

"Yes, my darling, some time. I have walked a long distance, and I shall be better for it."

"You went to—the funeral?" faltered Maude, the soft pink fading out of her cheek, and almost shrinking, it would seem, from the caress.

He looked down upon her questioningly.

"Yes, dear; I did, but how did you guess it? I hope you are not still dwelling on that sorrowful scene, my little Maude. You must not lose the brightness and gaiety that have been my delight. I cannot afford it."

The girl tried to smile, but her efforts ended in a sigh, and a shudder went through her frame. She bent over her work to hide it, and taking up a pearl, slipped it upon the string.

Still watching narrowly the ingenuous face which gave its agitated changes so plainly to a scrutinising eye, he took up the tray, and spoke with a playful tone.

"And what is this to be? I find you, like the eastern princesses, stringing pearls. What shall you do with it, Maude?"

"It is for Rowena's headdress—in the tableau, you know. Aggie there is to be gorgeous in crimson velvet. Won't she be a charming Rebecca?"

"Thanks, lovely Rowena," responded Miss Ackland, gathering up her skirt to hold its treasure while she rose, and courtseyed to the ground. "It is very generous in you to be content with pearls, and to lend me diamonds, I acknowledge, but then you will be Rowena, and have Ivanhoe kneeling at your feet."

"Who is Ivanhoe?" questioned Mr. Kyrle, forcing himself to appear interested, and longing to see that listless look on his daughter's face brighten into its old animation.

"Let me think. Who is to be Ivanhoe, Agnes? Was it young Thornton or Gerald Howe?" answered Maude, making a loop, and holding off her work to examine the effect.

"Forgotten! Tell me, uncle Arthur, was there ever before a damsel so disdressed? She cannot tell who is to be the sighing hero! And there he is, palpitating with delight, and sighing for very excess of passionate joy over the privilege of kneeling at her feet, and clasping that fair hand, even in the brief minutes of a tableau. Bless me! do I fail to remember Ivanhoe, or Bois Gilbert? Maude, sweetest cousin mine, you are a marvel in this degenerate age of flirtation!"

After which speech, delivered in the gayest tone, and with a little accompanying pantomime of graceful gestures, Miss Ackland sat down and fell to knotting the glowing velvet again, but she broke forth again, as if upon sudden prompting:

"Oh! by the way, Maude, do you know there is a gentleman here the very personification of our ideal Ivanhoe? Such a splendid physique, and such a sunny frankness of expression. I had half a mind to beg the landlord to coax him to take the part. I did find out as much as his name. Mr. Lermont; it has a strange sound, has it not? I only want you to see the man himself."

She appeared to be still looping velvet, but under the half-lowered lids shot a swift and searching glance, that lost none of the scarlet flush which suddenly dyed sweet Maude's transparent face.

"Yes, he is so much more an Ivanhoe than Gerald Howe, who is too slender and narrow-chested by far. I have really a mind to manage an introduction," she proceeded, in a musing tone.

Maude started up at the risk of upsetting the pearls.

"Oh, no, Agnes! you must not. How strange it would look! Gerald will do nicely."

"But he can't rouse any interest in fair Rowena, and I am not sure but this Mr. Lermont might," persisted Agnes Ackland, not without a little malicious

satisfaction at the discomposure manifested in her cousin's face.

"How absurdly you talk!" answered Maude, speaking swiftly, and then drawing her jewel casket towards her, she turned to her father, and talked gaily, only anxious to change the subject.

"See, papa! I want your judgment. Shall Rowena wear pearls on her arms, or these dead gold bands, that have such a barbaric look?"

"Pearls, by all means, dear. This pearl-tinted arm never looks so fair as when you bind it with ocean blossoms. Let those heavy circlets go with the diamonds. Didn't you say you were to lend them to Agnes?"

"Yes, papa. How much do my diamonds cost? They are very handsome, know, but I never stopped to think of their cost."

"I wouldn't mind now, then, Maude. None too much for my darling, my one treasure," he answered.

"But yet, I dare say, quite a little fortune for some people. Papa, would you mind if I sold them sometime?"

"Sold your diamonds, dear child?"

The sweet voice wavered a little, the snowy lids, dropping low, veiled her eyes from him, but she answered firmly:

"Yes, papa! I never liked them, never! they are so cold and heavy. And—and—it pleases me to think I may sell them, and put away the money somewhere safely, and by-and-by find a little fortune waiting for me."

There was an eager pleading in the voice, and a tremulous quiver of agitation, seeing which, Mr. Kyrie answered, soothingly:

"I shall not blame you, my child, do what you will. I chose the stones myself, and had them set for you. But if you are tired of them, put them away. Please yourself, Maude."

"Sell these diamonds! these splendid diamonds!" ejaculated Agnes, in a tone of the deepest horror and consternation. "Oh, Maude! how can you be so cruel?"

"They are not half so becoming to you, Aggie, as the cut coral, and you may wear those as often as you please. But it doesn't please me to think I carry around what would make so many poor creatures happy and comfortable."

Agnes bit her lip, but something on Mr. Kyrie's face warned her that she had said enough, and though she secretly determined upon a private remonstrance with the easily-influenced Maude, she desisted now, and in a few moments gathered up her working materials and went off to her own room, humming a gay air.

Mr. Kyrie put his arm fondly around his daughter, and drew her head close against his breast.

"Is it a fancy of mine? a delusion—or is it the sorrowful truth that some shadow, cold and forbidding, has crept between my darling's heart and mine? Maude, my child, is there anything for you to tell your father?"

A faint tremor crossed her face; her heart beat fiercely, her hands tightened their grasp of his, but she faltered:

"No, papa, I have nothing to tell."

"And the shadow?" he continued, with tenderest tone. "Does my daughter love me as fondly as ever?"

The tears poured over her face as she answered:

"How can you question it, cruel papa? Are you not all I have in the world, you and aunt Elise?"

"Then what has changed my bright-faced, open-hearted girl into this nervous, troubled, almost, it seems, cold and alienated stranger?"

Maude rallied out of the tempest of sobs which she longed so much to indulge.

"That is just it, papa. I am nervous. I can't explain, but everything looks so differently. Before, I only saw the brightness, and beauty, and gladness all around me. I did not dream of the lurking troubles. Now, I have seen them for myself, and I cannot forget that this life of ours is a terribly solemn thing, full of dangers, trials—oh, papa, have patience, I am a frightened, dizzy child, treading on flowers that seem to me will give way, and show beneath a yawning gulf! I see constantly that livid, contorted face staring at me!"

She buried her face on his shoulder, and clung to him, trembling from head to foot.

A grave trouble hung over Mr. Kyrie's face.

"Maude, dearest, you must try to overcome the weakness. Did he talk with you? Did he ask any questions? Did he know your name?"

"No—oh, no," she answered, huskily, and then, lifting her head and looking straight into his face with her pathetic eyes, she asked, suddenly: "Did you ever know the man—this James Long? Did you ever see him, father?"

Despite his efforts to the contrary, Mr. Kyrie's face betrayed his annoyance at the question; and Maude took note of it with a sinking at the heart.

"James Long? Yes, I think I have had some business dealings with a man of that name," he said, slowly.

"But you were at the funeral. Did you recognise the deceased," and again that shiver ran through her frame, "as the man you knew?"

"I could not be sure," came again, slowly and reluctantly.

Maude drew herself out of his arms. All the nervous flutter of her manner dropped away into a cold, almost storn composure.

"Well, as you say, there is nothing for me to do but to try my best to forget this sad experience. Where is Aunt Elise, I wonder? She must have found a wondrously fascinating book. I will take a look at her."

And she swept away and left him a moment alone, feeling vaguely chilled and depressed. And then came Aunt Elise, her eyes full of wistful enquiry as she glided up to him.

"You have seen the last of it?"

"Yes, Elise, the last of that man. I thought when I came home that a mill-stone was lifted off my neck, but—"

"But what, Arthur?"

And her melodious voice was full of tender interest, and her soft eyes held a sweet peace, for all their melancholy.

He swept one hand across his forehead with an impatient movement which she had known in him when a boy.

"I don't know, Elise. A cloud seems to be settling down upon me. A cloud, black, cold, and oppressive, and the most trying thing about it is that I cannot tell where its bolt will fall. Elise, is it through Maude that my punishment for the concealment of this woful secret shall come?"

"If there is punishment for you, Arthur, it should come to me also, for our guilt is equal."

"Nay, my poor Elise, what different could you have done—you, a weak, tender-hearted, helpless woman? Well, well, one gap is closed up, one dreaded voice silenced. I ought to be lighter-hearted, and yet I am not; I am unutterably sad."

"You were at the funeral?"

"Yes, and I have come away filled with profound pity for him. He kept his word, but it must have preyed upon him. It is not pleasant to go over the sorrowful history these honest neighbours have told. I can see that the fatal secret ate away his life. Elise, the money that I have paid faithfully, year by year, was never touched, he scorned to use a shilling for his own need. It was put away, and left to the poor of the neighbourhood. He earned, by the pitiful net of a fisherman, enough to satisfy a hermit's fare. And he was buried to-day like a pauper."

A mist crept over her soft eyes.

"Heaven grant the weary soul has found rest and forgiveness, and reward also, for faithful performance of his promise! Ah me! things are so strangely jangled in this weary world one cannot always tell the right from the wrong."

"I have ordered a stone for the grave," continued Mr. Kyrie, in the same dry, hard tone of repressed emotion. "It was little enough for me to do. I wish I could overcome this feeling that somehow the man has left a ghostly retribution behind through this innocent Maude of ours."

"I think she will be better when she is taken away from the scenes which naturally recall the agitating experience. It was a great shock to a peculiarly sensitive nature."

"You see as plainly as I do that the child seems struggling against some disagreeable and uncanny impression. When she left me just now, I could hardly persuade myself that it was really my tender, impulsive, glad-hearted Maude."

"We will have her back soon, I trust. Leave her untroubled with questioning a little longer, Arthur. I fear you probed some secret wound, by the look in the clear eyes, too innocent to hide their pain. She took the Bible out of my hand, and asked a rather singular question, which sent a pang to my own heart. 'Aunt Elise,' said she, 'is it true that the Bible will always show us our duty?' And she turned over the leaves to the commandments, and sat staring at them in a way that distressed me."

"We will leave her as speedily as possible. Agnes will want to stay, I suppose, until after the tableau, but then I shall return home or try another place. I think these shores are haunted for me, as well as for poor little Maude. Oh, Elise, if only I had your angelic faith and trust! Elise! Elise! comfort me!"

He stretched out his hand towards her, his countenance flaming up into a passionate devotion, which brought swift blushes to her face, not alone of modest shyness, it seemed, but likewise of some humiliating pain.

"Arthur!" was all she said, but the low, said voice held its keen reproach.

He covered his face with both hands, and exclaimed through his clenched teeth:

"Oh, Elise! my heart is not always iron; it will rebel sometimes!"
(To be continued.)

A VELOCIPEDIST has performed the journey from Vauxhall to Newbury, 60 miles, in ten hours.

TELEGRAPHIC connection with Australia is about to be carried out by the British-Australian Telegraph Company. The work will consist of 563 miles of cable from Singapore to Batavia, and will join the Dutch line which crosses the south-eastern extremity of Java, from which point another cable of 1,163 miles is to be laid to Port Darwin. A land line of about 800 miles will connect this with all the Australian colonies. From England to Singapore the messages will be taken by the Falmouth and Malta, the Anglo-Mediterranean, and the British-Indian Extension Companies thus forming a complete route.

THE EARTHQUAKE AT SANTA MAURA.—Our Malta correspondent writes as follows: "In consequence of telegrams received from Corfu respecting the earthquake at Santa Maura, by which that town was destroyed on the 27th ult., and the people rendered homeless and in a state of starvation, the naval commander-in-chief at Malta, after communicating with the authorities at home by telegraph, was enabled to despatch on Sunday, at 2 o'clock p.m., her Majesty's ship Bellerophon, Captain F. Marten, with a large supply of biscuit and flour, to the scene of the catastrophe. A telegram has since been received from Corfu, saying that the Greek authorities were most grateful for the assistance afforded, and that the supplies were most opportune. The destruction appears to have been most complete. To make matters worse, the brigands had attacked the place, and, after committing all sorts of atrocities, had made off with a number of prisoners—it is supposed for the purpose of extorting ransoms. Seventeen persons were killed by the earthquake, and many injured. The scenes were most heartrending."

THE SEPARATE TRADING OF MARRIED WOMEN.—There are seven circumstances under which a married woman may carry on a trade or business. First, she may do so as the agent of her husband. This is the most common form under which a married woman trades. The business, although carried on by her, and even in her own name, is in law the business of her husband. He takes, or is entitled to take, all profits, and is liable upon all contracts. Secondly, where the husband being civilly dead the wife carries on business as a single woman. Thirdly, a married woman can carry on trade in her individual capacity within the City of London. Fourthly, a married woman may absent herself from her husband and carry on business without his permission or without his knowledge. In this case he is entitled to her earnings and to her stock in trade; but so long as he does not interfere with the business he is not liable upon her contracts. Fifthly, a married woman, deserted by her husband, may obtain a protection order under 20 and 21 Vict., c. 80, s. 21, and carry on a trade. She is, then, in respect of that trade, exactly in the position of a single woman. Sixthly, she may carry on a trade in pursuance of an ante-nuptial agreement with her husband. Seventhly, she may carry on business in pursuance of a post-nuptial agreement with her husband.

THE THAMES EMBANKMENT APPROACHES.—Mr. Bazalgette, engineer, has reported to the Metropolitan Board of Works that it seems probable the Thames Embankment and roadway to the Mansion House, as well as the Metropolitan District Railway to Bread-street-hill, will be ready to be opened to the public in the course of the coming summer. The only approaches at present sanctioned by Parliament are the Whitehall-place, the Craven-street, Villiers-street, and the Norfolk, Surrey, and Arundel-street approaches. He recommends that Mr. Webster be requested to give a price for forming these approaches in macadam, as he has the contract for forming the rest of the main road. He also recommends that Mr. Kenzie be instructed to lay out and level the several plots of vacant ground, and to purchase and plant trees and shrubs, and to prepare the ground for the same in the course of the ensuing spring. The purchase of the land belonging to the Crown required for the Whitehall-place approach is not yet completed. The Metropolitan District Railway Company have requested that the Whitehall-place approach may be opened simultaneously with the Charing-Cross Railway Station, which the company expect to have completed within three or four months. So much of the above as relates to the formation of the approaches, and the purchase of the Crown land for the Whitehall-place approach, is under the consideration of the works committee; and the subject of laying out and planting the portion of the embankment referred to is under the consideration of the parks, commons, and open spaces committee.



[THE ABDUCTION.]

ROUND THE WORLD.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ALL UNCONSCIOUS of the presence and machinations of their enemy, Lily and Roland enjoyed their stay at Honolulu, never tiring of sitting on deck and watching the scenes in the harbour and on shore, or of wandering up and down the streets of the strange city.

The morning after their arrival they made inquiries of a waterman; discovering that the Annie Colton had been into port, replaced some damaged spars, and secured provisions, and that she had resumed her voyage to the North Pacific only the day previous to their arrival.

It may be imagined what a disappointment the discovery brought to the adventurers.

"One thing is certain," said Lily, when she had given expression to her regrets; "if the Annie Colton has passed, so has the Dolphin, although the waterman doesn't remember Captain Stocks's ship."

"The Annie Colton is the faster sailer," said Roland; "but she would have been hindered by the damages she received, and so it is quite possible that the Dolphin overtook her. We shall see neither vessel again, Lily, until we see them in the port of Sag Harbour. Captain Wexley will find our letters here, though, when he returns from his cruise."

Their minds thus set at ease concerning the Dolphin, neither thought of looking for her among the forest of masts, or inquiring if she were in port. They had so many pleasanter subjects to occupy them, so many inquiries to make, so many interesting speculations to discuss about the volcanic origin of the islands, their respective sizes, and the wonderful volcano of Hawaii, Manna Loa, that they forgot all that was unpleasant in their adventures, for nearly everything but the happy present and the blissful fact that they should soon be on their way home.

The general and Mrs. Beverley devoted themselves to the young pair, generally accompanying them on their excursions. The captain treated them with the most affectionate kindness. The doctor, the purser, the supercargo, and the missionary, all were kind and attentive to the young adventurers, delighting in their joy, and always ready to assist them in their efforts to acquire information.

Three days were thus happily passed.

The freight had been mostly taken on board the Ocean Wave, the live stock had been gathered into

their pens, and fresh stores had been put into store-room and pantry.

They were to pass but one night more in port, and all was bustle and confusion on board the ship. Much remained to be done before the vessel should leave at nine o'clock the next morning. Small boats swarmed around the merchant ship, shrill Kanaka voices challenged sailors to unusual bargains, their tones drowned in the cries that resounded on the deck.

On the morning subsequent to their arrival, the general and Mrs. Beverley, accompanied by Lily and Roland, had called upon the English consul and his wife at their residence.

The presence of the distinguished ex-ambassador from China had created quite a stir among the English residents, and the result of the call was that the party had scarcely returned to the ship when an invitation came from the consul's lady to her late visitors bidding them to a party at her house on the next evening—the one preceding their intended departure.

The invitation was accepted by all concerned as a pleasant break in the monotony of sea life.

As soon as the bustle of freighting had died out at the close of the day, the bustle of getting ready for the party began.

Mr. Beverley dressed himself early in an evening suit, looking every inch the stately and distinguished gentleman, and withdrew into the cabin, leaving his suite of rooms to the occupancy of Mrs. Beverley and Lily.

The little maiden was in a flurry of joyful excitement. It seemed to her that the flossy hair had suddenly become refractory, every separate hair having a tendency to curl upon its own account, but at last comb and brush had reduced it to subjection, and it fell around her like a veil of pale, burnished gold, rippling in tiny waves over her shoulders.

"Life is full of changes," she said, reflectively, as she continued to brush the curling tendrils away from her white forehead. "A few weeks ago we were afraid of being eaten up by cannibals, and to-day we are dressing for a party."

"Yes, life is full of changes, my little philosopher," said Mrs. Beverley, patting the round, snowy shoulder peeping out from a nest of lace ruffles. "You have learned the lesson early, dear."

"I wonder," mused Lily, "what the next change will be in Roland's life and mine?"

The toilettes were at last all made. General Beverley was reading a newspaper in the cabin, when Roland, neatly dressed in black, with a bow of scarlet ribbon confining his wide linen collar, came out from his state-room.

Then the missionary, in a ministerial suit, with white lawn neck-cloth, made his appearance.

Then came the captain, the purser, the supercargo, and the doctor, all in suitable evening dress, their gloves in their hands or pockets, ready to be put on after reaching the scene of the evening's gaieties.

The doctor was settling his necktie before the mirror; the dandy-like purser was slyly peering over the doctor's shoulder; and General Beverley was in the act of putting away his Honolulu newspaper, when Mrs. Beverley swept out into the cabin, radiant in her glowing beauty and elegant attire.

Roland almost held his breath as he looked at her.

She wore a dress of amber satin, whose soft folds, glossy sheen, and sweeping train, gave her the air of an empress. Folds of rich lace fell in most bewildering fashion about her corsage, "half concealing, half revealing" the contour of her graceful neck and shoulders. Her dark hair, glossy, and with a purple bloom upon it, was gathered low at the back of her neck into a heavy coil, and ornamented with a diamond spray that glowed at every movement of the wearer. Diamonds glittered on her neck and arms, flashing out their glorious wealth of prismatic hues, emitting showers of sparks, and almost blinding the observer.

Her husband's face lighted up with a joyful pride as he beheld her.

It was evident enough that this fair and beautiful woman held complete sway over his heart and soul—and she was worthy of her loving empire. Her brown eyes glowed with an answering light, and she took her place at the general's side with an air of wifely deference inexpressibly charming.

After Mrs. Beverley came Lily—little fairy Lily, with her pure, dainty face, and its frame of floating hair. Her dress was simple and childlike—a blue muslin, tucked and ruffled, low in the neck and short in the sleeves. She was all excitement and animation. Her eyes fairly danced with the prospect of pleasure, and her delicate little figure seemed to partake of the characteristics of the will-o'-the-wisp—she was here, there, and everywhere.

"I am ready, captain, if you are waiting for me," she said, gaily.

"Then we'll be off," said the captain, smiling. "I fancy this must be your first party, Miss Lily. I wish I could get up such enthusiasm as yours. But it's an old story with me. Instead of the fairy-land you seem to expect, I look for a crush and jam, a lot of senseless gossip, and a dull affair generally."

the only oasis in the desert being a good supper. That our respected consul, as an Englishman, will be sure to have."

There was a general laugh. The ladies threw on their shawls, the gentlemen donned their hats, all proceeded ashore, going on foot to the consul's residence.

The night was bright and pleasant, full of a dreamy languor, with a light, delicious haze over land and sea. The stars beamed brightly down, the breezes blew softly, and the skies promised continuous fine weather.

Lily danced along at Roland's side, unable to comprehend the depth of passionate love for her that surged in his soul.

He was a boy no longer. Events had conspired to awaken him rudely from the carelessness and thoughtlessness common to his years. Despite his youth he was a man in heart, and mind, and soul—early and suddenly matured, but none the less prompt, energetic, manly, and resolute. He knew that his love for Lily was the love of his life. It was pure and passionate, watchful and vigilant, giving everything and exacting nothing, until Lily should be old enough to comprehend the full and sublime meaning of love and existence.

Unconscious of the change in her foster-brother, Lily chattered after her childlike fashion, gay and full of a quaint wisdom that set her apart from all other children.

In due time the party arrived at the consular residence, an ample dwelling surrounded by a wide verandah, and set in a great, pleasant garden, full of pleasant, leafy nooks. The garden sloped down to the sea, terminating in a coral beach, and the house commanded a superb view of the harbour, the barrier, reef, and the chafing, restless sea.

There were guests already assembled—American merchants, captains and visitors, foreign consuls and some Hawaiian dignitaries. The rooms were brilliantly lighted and adorned with flowers. To Lily's astonishment, the furniture very much resembled that to which she was accustomed at home. There were two or three young people present, and with them Lily fraternised at once, careful, however, not to neglect Roland, nor to prefer the attendance of any other to his.

It would be impossible to give a detailed account of the events of the evening—how general and Mrs. Beverley were greeted and honoured—how the young adventurers were wondered at and admired—how Lily was called a score of times a "lovely little creature," "a perfect little darling," and other appropriate names—how dancing was dispensed with out of respect to the missionaries, and how delicious music by amateur performers vibrated on the delighted ear.

The windows were all flung open to admit the air. The consul and his lady had the rare and desirable faculty of setting their guests all at ease, and the stream of conversation was soon set flowing in pleasant channels.

In due course of time, the supper was served. It was found to fully equal the expectations of the bon-vivant captain of the Ocean Wave. Roland proudly escorted Lily to the supper-room, and helped her to such a variety of dainties that the little maiden fancied his senses had departed.

The long table sparkled with crystal and silver, and was loaded with cakes, cold meats, oysters, and the thousand delicacies suited to the time, the place, and the season. Flowers abounded amid the feast, so exquisitely arranged in bouquets as to elevate the art of eating into something far above vulgar necessity. For the young people there were coffee and lemonade, for the non-temperance guests wines of high price with high-sounding names.

All tastes were consulted. After supper Roland made the discovery that the garden had been lighted by Chinese lanterns, and the young people passed out into the fairy-like region at once, Mrs. Beverley thoughtfully insisting that Lily should wear her shawl.

"The air is damp, darling," she said, with a motherly tenderness. "You must not get ill on the very eve of our departure."

She kissed Lily fondly, and watched her from an open window for a few moments as she flew down the garden-walk to join her gay companions, and then the lady turned away with a heavy sigh.

"Let's have a dance out here," said Nelly Williams, the hoydenish daughter of one of the wholesale merchants. "It would be so pleasant under the trees. There are just enough of us."

The proposition was agreed to, and the dance was inaugurated. The dancers formed a pretty sight, in the strange light of the Chinese lanterns, their gay figures awaying to and fro to the sound of a cracked violin, Nelly Williams having coaxed a servant from the house to perform upon the instrument for them.

Lily entered into the spirit of the gaiety with a wild enjoyment that might have been the reaction of her late depression.

After dancing, the young people told stories, rid-

dles, and conundrums, their merry shouts of laughter ringing far out over the water.

They were so absorbed in their diversions that none of the group heard the grating of a boat's keel against the coral reef at the foot of the garden, nor the cautious approach of stealthy steps to the scene of mirth.

Not one felt the burning gaze of a pair of evil eyes that peered out from a rose-thicket.

"I shall always love Honolulu," said Lily, when the conversation had begun to flag. "It's such an odd, pretty place, and they are such nice people here. I shall think of you all a thousand times when I am safe in my Brixham home, and so will Roland, too. Won't you, Roland?"

"Indeed I will," said Roland, earnestly.

"You ought to see the beach," said Nelly Williams. "The harbour is perfectly splendid by moonlight. But first, before we take you down there, let's have a game of hide-and-seek. There are lots of places to hide in this garden."

The game was resolved on at once, Nelly offering to be the first "seeker." In a moment the party had scattered, Lily and Roland hurrying through the soft shadows down towards the beach.

"Let's hide together, Lily," said her foster-brother. "I have resolved never to leave you alone when I can help it again. Here's a splendid place to hide, under a great rock that must have been thrown up, just as it is, by a volcano many ages ago. Come."

He drew her in the deep shade of the little bluff. "They'll look for us a good while without finding us, I fancy," laughed Lily, resting close in Roland's arms.

The owner of the evil eyes had followed their flying steps, and was so near them at that instant that he heard their words.

He uttered a low, shrill whistle, and came under the shadow of the bluff.

"I've found you again, have I?" he said, and his voice betrayed him to be Captain Stocks. "There's no Bickley to help you this time. No screaming and fighting, young man. You are fairly trapped."

Before he had done speaking his first mate, his cook, and his steward, were at his side.

At a signal from him, they sprang at the dumb-founded fugitives, clapped their hands over their mouths, and bore them, gasping and struggling, to a sail-boat that rocked in the shade of an adjacent bluff.

A moment later, the sail-boat went dancing over the waters, the cook and the steward still holding the young couple, the mate and the captain attending to the boat.

In a short time they had left behind them the scene of the evening's festivities.

"The Dolphin lies outside the harbour, waiting for us!" said Stocks, with a gleam of fiendish joy on his sinister face. "We sailed out after you all went ashore. In half-an-hour, before you are even missed at the consul's, thanks to your game of hide-and-seek, you'll be on board the Dolphin, sailing towards the whaling grounds."

The boat flew on, manned by nervous hands that sought to extract from her every inch of speed of which she was capable. In half-an-hour's time, as Stocks had said, the poor young fugitives were again on board the Dolphin, and sailing away from friends and safety.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LILY and ROLAND, in their gala dress, with pale and startled faces, sat in the dingy cabin of the Dolphin, gazing at each other in wordless grief. The dim light flickered on the ship's sides, blinding their tear-woolen eyes.

The rush of the waves against the vessel, the rocking motion of the ship, the old smell of bilgewater, all were oppressive and sickening to their troubled senses.

Roland felt keenly humiliated that his strength had not been sufficient to cope with his sturdy assailants—that he had not been able to shriek out for help, that, in short, he had not been a more efficient protector to his idolised foster-sister. Too noble and too unselfish to even think of himself in that moment, his heart bled for Lily.

Lily, in turn, thought more of others than herself, though she was keenly alive to the perils of her position. She thought of General and Mrs. Beverley, and wondered what they would think when they discovered her and Roland's absence. She thought of the kind captain, and all her friends on board the Ocean Wave, and, more heart-brokenly than all, of the interrupted voyage home.

There was a long silence between the young couple, and Lily was the first to break the silence.

Roland expected reproaches, complaints, and tearful repining. He was not prepared to hear her exclaim:

"Well, it's fortunate, as it's turned out, Roland, that we wrote home from Honolulu. Papa and mamma will be sure to receive the letter, and it will comfort them."

Roland breathed more freely at the tone, so much more cheerful than he had expected.

"Why, Lily," he replied, "you are not hopeless and despairing, as I feared."

"No, Roland," said Lily, "I am not hopeless and despairing, so long as you remain to me. I know you'll get us out of our trouble somehow."

"And you don't blame me, Lily, for allowing us to be taken captive so easily," inquired the lad, earnestly.

"Of course not," answered Lily, in surprise. "How could I blame you, Roland, for not overcoming four great, stout men? And if you had called for help, the boys and girls would have thought it a part of the play. You were not at all to blame, Roland."

"Thank you, darling. I feared you blamed me—I feared I deserved it. And you won't give up to despair?"

"Not I!" declared Lily, emphatically. "I wouldn't give Captain Stocks such a chance to exult over me. The only way to deal with such people, Roland, is to pretend you don't care what they do. That's my philosophy."

"It is the best," said Roland, recovering his spirits, and feeling once more that all was not lost. "You are a true comforter, Lily. You give me courage in spite of myself. How fortunate that we hid together on the beach. If Captain Stocks had taken you alone, I should have died of grief."

"What do you suppose Mrs. Beverley will think has become of us?" inquired Lily, after a pause.

"I'm sure I don't know. She may think we drowned. Unless our friends learn that the Dolphin has been in port and left to-night, our disappearance will for ever remain a mystery to them."

Lily looked anxious over this declaration, and lapsed into silence again, a silence which Roland did not disturb.

For some time they sat thus, hand in hand, their minds busy. At length both started at the sound of a familiar step on the companion-way, and clung yet closer together as Captain Stocks entered their presence.

"Sailing, eh?" he said, looking at them with a jubilant face. "I've good news for you. We've a spanking wind under our quarter, and are bowling over the Pacific at a great rate. Honolulu is all out of sight, and we are stretching away bravely from the island."

"If the wind is so good for you, it's just as good for our friends," cried Lily, undauntedly. "They may come out after us. They know all about you, and they hate you as much as I do!"

"Do they?" inquired the whaler, not at all overcome by this assurance. "I'm dreadfully sorry. But you shouldn't hate me, Lily. I am your uncle—your dear, rich papa's wicked brother. You should deal gently with the prodigal. How nice it would be if you could only make me repent my evil ways!"

He sat down with an expression of meek penitence that quite enraged the spirited Lily.

She turned her back upon him, too angry to speak.

"Softly, my sweet niece," said Captain Stocks, in a tone of gentle remonstrance. "You remind me of a canary or humming-bird, pecking at a hawk in a fit of puny rage. I told you I'd lay hold of you again some day; and I've kept my word, you see! But, perhaps you'd like to know how much trouble you've caused me since we met last, and what I've been doing, eh? Well, as I wish to entertain you"—and Captain Stocks laughed derisively—"I'll tell you. I vowed to catch you both again, if it cost me my ship to do it. And after leaving Tristan d'Aounha I sailed to the southward, but came back to Tristan d'Aounha again within twelve hours after the Annie Colton had sailed, thinking that Captain Wexley might have left you on the island to be taken over to the Cape of Good Hope, from which point you could easily get a passage home. I found myself mistaken, and would have immediately clapped on all sail and started for the Sandwich Islands to intercept you there, but that we fell in with sperm whales, and the crew would not have been satisfied to pass them. When I did set sail, however, I made the utmost speed, and believed on entering the harbour of Honolulu that the Colton was behind me. The first thing I inquired after was the Colton, and I learned she had sailed out of port the day before we entered. I thought then that you must still be in port!"

"It was easy to discover where we were," said Roland, wondering that he had not made more careful inquiries respecting the Dolphin's presence in port.

"Before I had a chance to inquire, I saw you two in the street, in company with the ambassador from China and his wife. I saw you go on board the Ocean Wave, and Mr. Striker and I put our heads together to get up a plan to entice you on our ship. The whole town was ringing with the news of the consul's party the very next day, and we saw our way clear to the kidnapping business."

"But," said Roland, calmly, "all this does not explain what you are to gain by stealing us."

"True, but it paves the way to such an explanation," said Stocks, blandly. "Of course, on our voyage to Honolulu, I formed all my plans. I foresaw the latter business, and the complete exposure, etc. But my heroic soul arose undismayed above even such appalling pullbacks. As in the first place, Mr. Roland Nameless, I intend to bottle you two up till wanted. I am going to put you where you will remain until I come for you."

"You mean to shut me and Lily up, while you go to our father and exact a ransom for us?" said Roland.

"I fear the credit of that remark belongs to me, else I should be inclined to wonder at the keenness of your perceptive faculties," said Stocks, ironically. "I believe I told you last year that such was my plan, did I not?"

"And you have not changed it?"

"Not a particle."

"But you will be arrested on landing?"

"Not so, my young friend," said the captain, coolly. "I have formed the idea of landing at one of the West India Islands on my return, and sending the ship home in the care of the mate while I disguise myself and go to England by steamer. I shall then run down to Brixham, tell my rich, good brother that I have you safely hived; and that I must have the larger half of his fortune cash down, or he'll never see you again. Of course, he'll come down with the money, forgive me in the delight of seeing you again, and I'll retire to some foreign land to enjoy my well-earned fortune."

Roland's heart sank as he saw how well-conceived was the villain's plan for extorting money.

"Why do you go further on your whaling cruise?" he asked. "Why not go directly home?"

"To answer that I must let you into a little secret. I own half the Dolphin—the mate one-fourth, and a party in Brixham the remaining fourth. The mate is my friend all through. I want to finish the whaling voyage, partly for the money I shall make by having a full cargo, and partly because my mate insists upon it. For his share in my personal business, I let him have my half the Dolphin dog-ship. He will see that I have my dues from the cargo and vessel, if I hang on for a full cargo."

"Your plan seems very well arranged," said Roland, quietly. "Where do you intend to leave us?"

"On an island up in these waters, considerably to the eastward, and out of our course," was the reply. "If the Ocean Wave should come after us, she could not tell our route. I mean to make tracks enough so that even my own men could never find the island again, if they were offered a fortune to do it."

"Is the island uninhabited?" asked Lily.

"No, but the inhabitants are a brutal race, very low and degraded. They will not harm you, but they will keep a keen watch on you. They speak a language it would take you years to learn. I stopped there once, being driven out of my course, and it so happened that I won the good-will of their chief through presents of trinkets and whisky. A little whisky would make him my slave."

"Your master seems to help you in your schemes," said Roland, bitterly. "Take care that he does not desert you one of these days, and leave you to the fate you richly deserve. The wicked do not always thrive, Captain Stocks. The right must some day triumph."

"I am willing. The right may triumph as soon as it pleases, after I have pocketed the half of my brother's fortune. You two won't be harmed. At best a year or two of exile—that is all."

"That is all?" repeated Lily, indignantly. "It is nothing that my mother weeps in vain for her lost children, that my father thinks us dead? Captain Stocks, your villainy is prospering now, but a day of repentance is coming."

She spoke so solemnly as almost to startle her enemy.

"I have taken you into my confidence," he said, recovering himself, "and it only remains to say that you will have no opportunity to escape again. My boats are too well secured to be easily lowered. My second mate and all the men friendly to you are watched. I am a desperate man, and not likely to be outwitted or thwarted. You may resign yourselves to what is inevitable."

Lily shuddered at the prospect before them. Roland grew pale and stern, and his brown eyes held in them a steady and awful rebuke to their villainous enemy, but the lad could not trust himself to speak.

What would speech avail? The villain was alike insensible to tears, prayers and entreaties, to threatening and scorn. Roland would not expose to Stocks' mocking gaze his own bleeding heart.

"Do with us as you will," he said, at length, solemnly. "There is one over—all—One whose arms have been about us till now, and who will not forsake us while we need His protection."

"Oh, if you are going to talk piety, I'll go on deck!" said Stocks, arising. "You'll find your rooms ready—clean sheets and all. You'd better turn in pretty soon. I'm going to blow out the cabin light in half an hour."

He went on deck, and Lily and Roland went to the maiden's room, and there in the darkness, both knelt down to pray. They arose, strengthened and comforted, and sat for a long time talking, but separated at last, both soon falling asleep in their respective berths.

And while they slept, the winds blew the Dolphin onward to her destination—that destination of which the mate and the captain alone knew the secrets!

(To be continued.)

DANGEROUS GROUND;

OR,

SHE WOULD BE A COUNTESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Heart's Content," "Tempting Fortune," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

King John: I'll tell thee what, my friend,
He is a very serpent in my way;
And whosoever this foot of mine doth tread,
He lies before me. Dost thou understand me?

King John.

AMANDA was roused from her reflections by the harsh and discordant voice of Mrs. Blarid, who commanded her to quicken her movements, giving her no peace until her task was completed; and she brought back the boots, which were before muddy and dingy, polished so brightly that the face was reflected in them.

For more than an hour Amanda had to listen to the taunts of the old woman, who boasted of the precautions she had taken to establish her power over her, and she was the more mortified because there was a great deal of sense in what the hag had done.

It was with a feeling of great relief that she beheld her persecutor continue drinking until the inevitable result was gained, and she rolled off her chair in hopeless intoxication.

Amanda involuntarily clutched a knife which lay on the table and held it over the woman, but, restraining her passion, she replaced it from whence she had taken it, muttering:

"Not yet! not yet! Her time has not yet come, though some day she will meet the fate she has done so much to merit."

Rapidly passed the week, and Amanda's whole thoughts were occupied with conjectures as to the course the Earl of Montargis would adopt at the coming interview between them. That he was not indifferent to her charms he had himself admitted. She was well educated, and, she believed, ladylike in her manner. In addition to these advantages, she had a very large fortune, which she had secured by her audacious fraud, and she was bold enough to hope that his lordship would make her an offer of marriage, as the best way of getting out of his difficulties.

Her lustrous eyes dilated as she dwelt upon this pleasant prospect.

To be a countess was all in all to her. If she could once arrive at that dignity, she cared nothing for her husband's love. To her, love was something utterly contemptible, when placed in the scales with the gratification of her ambition. She could and did love the Earl of Montargis, as we have said, but the great purpose of her life was to become a lady of rank. For a title she had sinned, and she was prepared to go to still greater lengths.

If she could win the man of her choice and the title as well, her happiness would, of course, be doubled, and her excitement was intense as the time went on, and the day appointed for her next meeting with the new earl drew near.

She tolerated the insults of old Blarid, and let her exercise her petty tyranny and authority without remonstrance, thinking that, if she was to become Countess of Montargis, the wretched old woman's threats would be worth little. The earl would not prosecute his wife. A family scandal would, at all hazards, be avoided, and even if she had to give up the fortune she had gained by her fraud, in order to compromise the matter, she had her husband's income from the entailed estates to fall back upon, which was considerable.

This was the pleasant way in which she indulged her fancy and imagination. She fancied herself already the Countess of Montargis, leader of fashionable circles in London and Paris, the admired of all admirers, and envied for her beauty, her rank, and her fortune. How she would dress! Whatever luxuries money could procure should be hers, and she would dazzle the world by the magnificence of her toilette. She pictured herself invited by the Emperor and Empress of the French to Compiègne

or the Tuileries, and vicing in her attire with the Empress herself, while all Paris raved about her incomparable costumes.

On the morning of the eventful day which was big with her fate, she received what she considered a note from the Earl of Montargis, signed with his initial, and couched in cautious language, informing her of the hour at which he proposed to meet her, and the spot which he thought would be the best for their interview to take place in. This was in the open fields, about a mile from Fontailles, and Amanda proceeded thither on a wet and disagreeable day, reaching the rendezvous as the distant church clock struck the hour of noon.

It had been raining all night, and a heavy, damp fog, just beginning to lift, aided by the heaviness of the atmosphere, made the day one of those dull, oppressive ones which we have in autumn. Her spirits drooped, perhaps owing to the influence of the weather, or it might be by an anticipation of the bad fortune to befall her.

The Earl of Montargis was a few minutes behind time. He rode a weight-carrying hunter, and had come straight across country, taking all obstacles in his way, hedges, ditches, and five-barred gates, from Montargis Park. He drew the rein of his panting steed, and dismounting, tied the horse up to a branch of a tree which grew hard by, and was isolated in the midst of the meadow.

He apologised for keeping her waiting, regretted the disagreeable character of the day, and was as polite as usual, and as apparently courteous and sincere in his manner as she could wish; but there was nevertheless a lurking constraint behind, which her quick woman's eye detected, and she feared for the success of her hopes before a word was spoken concerning the business upon which they were met.

"Have you thought over what passed between us when we last met, my lord?" inquired Amanda, as he exhibited some hesitation in opening the conversation.

"I have. Your communication, so startling to me, has received my most earnest attention, and after mature consideration I have determined upon a particular course of action."

"And that is?" she asked, anxiously.

"To treat all you have said as a mere fable," he answered, with more courage, setting himself in earnest to the task now that the ice was broken.

"I cannot believe anything you have said. My mother and I have held consultations, and we are agreed in thinking that you have been drawing upon your imagination, and that this Mr. Maxwell is some friend of your own, with whom you are in league. Indeed, you were seen talking confidentially to him on the day of my lamented father's funeral, which, you must admit, looked bad. In short, we can have nothing to do with you, and resolutely refuse to make any terms. With regard to my father's will, that will be contested to the last in the Probate Court as soon as you endeavour to prove. Thus you see we are irreconcilable—enemies, in fact, between whom there can be no intercourse. To make a long and disagreeable matter short, I may add that we defy you, and wish you to do your worst, in order that we may know what your worst is. If your story be true, then we shall be glad to do justice to that unfortunate individual whom you allege received such ill-treatment from my father. We wish to act in perfect good faith, and, having nothing to fear, wish for no concealment."

This address paralysed Amanda, who had expected something of a more encouraging nature. His lordship had not alluded to their marriage, which had been one of the subjects of their former conversation; but she was wise enough to see that he looked with repugnance upon such an alliance, and would make no terms with her. It was only by the exercise of a violent effort that she could collect herself sufficiently to reply.

"Have you considered the consequences of your refusal to treat with me, my lord?" she said.

"I have; and it will be well for you to reflect upon the punishment which would be awarded you if I proceeded against you and this man Maxwell for a conspiracy to defraud, and an attempt to extort money. This will probably be the course I shall take if I hear anything more of your absurd statements. Be wise! be warned in time!"

Amanda laughed scornfully.

"Is it well for you to take the high hand in this affair?" she asked. "My opinion is that you should have made terms with me. By defying me you will lose all, and it will be too late to retract when I once proceed to inform Mr. Maxwell of his real status in society. I shall set a ball in motion which our combined efforts will be unable to stop, and you will in the future in vain regret your hasty conduct now."

"That is my business," he replied, with some hauteur. "I am not afraid of the result of my actions. You will please to consider all negotiations at an end between us, and if you have anything further to say to me, be good enough to put

it in writing, and send it to me through my solicitor, Mr. Norton, of Nunninton, who is for the present retained to look after my affairs in the county."

Not giving her time to reply, the earl sprang lightly into the saddle, and saluting her with the same scrupulous politeness he had observed at meeting her, cantered away in the direction of Montargis Park, leaving Amanda overwhelmed with conflicting emotions, among which the one which reigned predominant was a desire for revenge.

"He shall dearly rue what he has said and done this day," she said aloud, as she gazed at his rapidly retreating figure. "I will lose no time in making common cause with Maxwell, and between us I think we can hit upon proofs that will make the inmates of Montargis Park tremble. How dare he to defy me! But I could have borne that, if he had not slighted my love. Never—never will I forgive him. Never—never will I rest, until I make him kneel at my feet, and humbly ask my pardon."

Her tempest of rage was soon over, and she subsided once more into the cool, crafty, cautious, plotting woman of the world. She walked slowly back to Fonthilla, and resolved to have an interview with Maxwell without any delay, and enlist him as an ally, by showing him how he could serve himself by serving her. Accordingly, she knocked at Betty Nason's door, and waited till the old woman came in answer to her somewhat imperious summons.

"The Lord bless you, miss, for coming to see a poor lone woman!" exclaimed Betty, who would have gone on with a string of grateful expressions suited to the occasion, had not she been interrupted rather hastily by Amanda, who said:

"I want to see your lodger, Mr. Maxwell. Is he within?"

Betty Nason's face grew serious. "No, he isn't, miss," she replied. "I wish to goodness I did know where he was, but I haven't seen him these three days, and am getting quite anxious about him. He hasn't been back here since Lord Mayland, that's now the Earl of Montargis, came, and took him out for a walk. His lordship's been here to enquire for him to-day, saying he left him at the inn in the village, but I have not seen nor heard of him, and can't make out at all where he's gone, or what's come to him, though I do hope and trust it's nothing bad, for a nicer young man, or a better behaved, when sober, never lodged in a house."

"Poor that I was!" cried Amanda, in a tone of despair. "I might have guessed this. My enemies have overreached me."

A feeling of faintness came over her, and she leant against the door-post for support, while the old woman regarded her with astonishment mingled with alarm.

CHAPTER XIX.

What doth ensue
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair,
And, at her heels, a huge infectious troop
Of pale distempers, and foes to life?

Comedy of Errors.

"It is decreed," she said, "that every living creature, even those who owe me most kindness, are to shun me, and leave me to those by whom I am beset. It is just! I should be thus alone and uncounselled, I involved myself in these perils—alone and uncounselled, I must extricate myself or die."

Bride of Lammermoor.

If, as she imagined, she was on the right track in supposing the man Maxwell to be the heir to the earldom of Montargis, Amanda was completely baffled by this bold stroke of the enemy.

The earl's duplicity had deceived her, for while she fancied he was debating within himself the advisability of marrying her, he was in reality devising a means of extricating himself from the meshes of the net with which she had encircled him.

To carry off Maxwell was a masterstroke of policy, and she was compelled to admit that the earl had deprived her of her principal weapon against him. She was like a scorpion deprived of its sting, and her power for harm was considerably lessened by the daring act of which she could not doubt for an instant the new Earl of Montargis was the perpetrator.

That which pained her most, however, was the shock which her pride received, and the terrible wound given to her vanity by the earl's decided aversion to her. Whether this dislike arose from her lowly origin, which made her in that sense an undesirable wife for one in his exalted position, or whether it was because he had a dislike to her personally, she could not tell. She hoped sincerely it might be the former; that could be got over; but if she found that her particular style of beauty did not find favour in his eyes, she could not bridge such a difficulty as that. Her features would retain their regularity, her eyes would remain dark, in spite of any efforts to the contrary.

When she was sufficiently recovered, she put a few questions which occurred to her to Betty Nason, respecting the time and hour of Maxwell's de-

parture with the earl, and then walked back to the cottage where she lived, looking herself in her room and brooding deeply over the events which had taken place.

Although baffled, she was by no means beaten; she had set her heart on becoming a countess, and she loved the possessor of the title which she hoped would some day ennoble her, and this made her all the more determined to conquer whatever prejudice he had, and persevere in her ambitious attempt to become the earl's wife.

Suddenly a pang darted through her heart as an idea, which she had not before thought of, suggested itself to her. It was probable that the earl, when Lord Mayland, had met some Court beauty who had captivated him, and she now knew what it was to be jealous, this detestable feeling losing none of its force and bitterness on account of her not knowing the name of the lady, or in fact feeling sure that there was any ground for her idea at all. The bare suspicion was quite enough to throw her into a fever of unrest, and cause her an exquisite amount of torment. After being a few hours alone, she became so restless and excited that she could bear no more solitude, and, descending to the lower part of the house, found old Blarid, who had been up to Montargis Park, and came back full of news, which she was as anxious to communicate to Amanda as the latter was to hear what she had to say.

"The earl has been away these two days," exclaimed Blarid; "but he's expected back to-night, having gone somewhere in the north of England, or maybe Scotland, they say. Mr. Norton, the solicitor, has been over very often this last week, and his advice to the countess is not to go to law with you, but to pay the money, as she must fail. She hasn't quite made up her mind, and I'm told Mr. Norton wants to see you, as he is willing to act for you in the matter. So you'd best go over to Nunninton and make a claim for your rights. My lady has a visitor who's come to condole with her; but my opinion is, it's only a plan to be near the young earl, for folks did couple her name with his, last season."

"Her name—what name?" cried Amanda, breathlessly. "Who is she?"

"Lady Constance Beverley, daughter of some nobleman high up at Court," replied old Blarid, perfectly unconscious of the misery she was inflicting upon her listener, who writhed with agony. "She's great friends with the Queen, her mother's a lady-in-waiting, and they're a good deal down at Windsor, and at Buckingham Palace. Lady Constance is very fond of the young earl, and so is he of her, if all they say is true. I got a look at her to-night by peeping over the bannisters, with Jane, the upper housemaid, as they were going in to dinner. She is lovely. More like an angel of light than any one living on earth—her complexion's dazzling, alabaster's nothing to it; and long flaxen hair, and such soft blue eyes, and full red lips, that seem to ask you to come and kiss them, while the dignity of her manner says 'Hands off' as plain as if she spoke it! I've seen a few beauties in my time, for I was in high life service in my young days, but Lady Constance beats all. She's perfect, and if I were a man, I do think I should fall down and worship her."

Controlling herself with a great effort, Amanda said:

"I should like to see this unrivalled beauty. Could you manage to get me near her? Perhaps some of the servants at the house will tell you when she is going out, or if she goes to church on Sundays. Did you hear if the earl thinks of marrying her?"

"Nothing is settled," replied Blarid, "and even if it was an arranged thing, the death of the earl would throw it over the twelve months. There'll be no marrying yet, that you may take my word for."

This was good news for Amanda. She recognised the truth of what Blarid said. Common decency, and that respect for the dead which even the most callous of relations are obliged to show, in deference to the prejudices of society, would effectually prevent the Earl of Montargis from leading Lady Constance Beverley to the altar, even were he inclined to do so, until twelve months at least had passed since the death of his father.

Twelve months!

It was a long time, and much might be done in that period. It put fresh life into Amanda's sinking frame, and invigorated her drooping spirit. As she sat by the waning fire, gazing into the glowing embers, trying to read her fate in their fantastic and ever-changing depths, with the old crone's droning voice ringing in her ears without carrying any special meaning, she vowed inwardly that, come what might, the Earl of Montargis should be her husband within that time.

The next day was Sunday, and Amanda went to church, dressed unostentatiously, as usual, in a black silk with a velvet jacket over it. The party from Montargis Park included the countess, her son the earl, who had returned from the North,

the Ladies Gwendoline and Selina Mayland, with their friend, the Lady Constance Beverley.

In spite of the prejudice she had imbibed against this lady, Amanda was forced to admit that in her she had a most formidable rival. If it were true that the earl had met her and given her his heart, she could not wonder at the conquest she had effected over him, for she was very beautiful, and seemed to be created on purpose to be loved.

The earl saw Amanda in her pew as he walked down the aisle, and she thought he somewhat ostentatiously offered his arm to Lady Constance Beverley, giving a side glance of triumph at her at the same time. This might have been fancy on her part, but she could not help feeling bitterly annoyed as she walked home. On the following day she visited Mr. Norton, the solicitor, at his office in Nunninton, and he received her very graciously. There was a smile on his lips which encouraged her to hope that her fraud in the will had stood the crucial test of examination by well-known experts, and that she would speedily reap the reward of her audacious fraud.

"Take a seat, Miss Garraway," exclaimed Mr. Norton, handing her a chair. "I was about to write to you to-day, and I am extremely glad that you have anticipated my request that you should pay me a visit. I must tell you that I have advocated your cause at Montargis Park with a view to a peaceable settlement, and at first I was received with more contumely than I expected. The countess would listen to no compromise."

"Nor will I," replied Amanda. "It may seem unjust that the countess and her daughters should be deprived of that which they thought they were justly entitled to, but the earl bequeathed his wealth to me because he acknowledged my kindness to him during his illness, and for special reasons, of which I have no cause to be ashamed, Mr. Norton, but which I need not stop to mention at greater length here."

"I think," replied the lawyer, "that I have suggested a means of settlement which will be satisfactory to both parties. The countess, of course, wishes for a separate maintenance, as she has a great repugnance to being dependent upon her son. The sum to which you are entitled under the earl's will is nearly a quarter of a million. My suggestion is that you should give up the odd fifty thousand, and be satisfied with the two hundred thousand remaining, which, properly invested, will bring you in, at five per cent., about ten thousand a year. What do you say to this? Allow me to add that I can see you feel an injustice done you in surrendering any part of what is legally yours. But consider the expense of protracted litigation. You may be kept out of this money for some years, though you may eventually enjoy it. Now, I take it that you wish to have it at once, without any litigation. This can only be done by a compromise. There is always the glorious uncertainty of the law, and even if you get a decree in your favour in the Probate Court, you will have to wait an appeal to the House of Lords. Take my advice, and sacrifice one-fifth in order to secure immediately the remaining four-fifths."

Amanda saw the force of this reasoning at once, and consented to the arrangement suggested by the lawyer, who, by effecting this compromise, as he called it, pleased both parties. The will was uncontested, and Mr. Norton promised in a few weeks to settle matters as to pay over to her about two hundred thousand pounds. Old Blarid was delighted to hear of this arrangement. A favourite saying of hers was that half a loaf is better than no bread; and in anticipation of the settlement, she made Amanda take a residence in the neighbourhood, known as Ivy Tower.

It was very ancient and of Norman architecture, but had been uninhabited for some years, as people said it was haunted. Round it ran a moat, always full of water, which had to be crossed by a drawbridge.

The furniture was old and rather dilapidated, but it altogether pleased the old woman, who was Amanda's mistress, though the latter shuddered every time she entered the place and trembled at the prospect of being shut up in such a dismal and antiquated building with Blarid, hoping most sincerely that the ghosts who were said to have their abode in the tower would pay her particular attention and drive her out before she had been there a week.

How this expectation was fulfilled will shortly be shown.

Mr. Norton was appointed by Amanda her agent and man of business generally. He prevented any litigation on the part of the Countess of Montargis, and the money he had promised to obtain for her was paid over to her account and lodged in a bank.

Thus was she triumphant so far; and had it not been for old Blarid, whom she hated more and more fiercely every day, she could have uninterruptedly enjoyed the fruits of her daring crime.

CHAPTER XX.

With tears indignant I behold th' oppressor
Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.

Around me scowls a wintry sky,
That blasts each bud of hope and joy;
And shelter, shade, nor home have I. Burns.

HAVING obtained all the information it was in her power to give him from Amanda, the Earl of Montargis lost no time in seeking an interview with Maxwell, whom he found accessible enough. Remembering that Amanda had described him as one fond of drinking, the earl put a bottle of brandy in his pocket, which proved a tempting bait. He met the unfortunate fellow at the entrance to the village, looking wistfully at the public-house, where his credit was exhausted and he could no more obtain that which was so dear to him.

Betty Nason acted as guide to his lordship, and pointed him out, saying:

"There's the man you asked me for, my lord. He's lodged with me some few weeks now, but I know little or nothing about him. He's not very communicative, though I did hear from somebody that he said himself he had been in an asylum, perhaps from drink, for he's dreadful when he gets his money, which is once a month, from a solicitor in London. He's harmless enough when he's sober; when he's in liquor, however, he raves dreadfully, though I don't know that he ever hurt anybody or did any mischief."

The earl thanked the garrulous old woman for her intelligence, and slipped a silver coin in her hand, for which she was deeply grateful. He then approached Maxwell, and wished him good morning. The latter stared at him rudely, and exclaimed:

"I am a gentleman, sir, and not in the habit of speaking to anyone without an introduction. Possibly you have made some mistake, though I saw you talking in a most confidential manner to the old crone with whom I have the good nature to lodge. I wish you good day, sir, as it is not my custom to hold any intercourse with strangers."

He was moving away, his head proudly erect, when the earl cried:

"Stay one moment, Mr. Maxwell. I am the son of one whom you knew well, and that must be my excuse for speaking to you so unceremoniously. My father's death has made me Earl of Montargis."

Maxwell became docile and submissive at once. That name alone had power to tame him, and he replied:

"That alters the case, my lord. The earl, whose funeral I attended, was a friend to me, the only one, in fact, I ever knew, although my memory sometimes carries me back to days when kind faces bent over me and loving lips were pressed to mine."

An expression of acute anguish crossed his handsome features, and he pressed his hand to his forehead as if to compel his fugitive thoughts to shape themselves into some distinct and tangible recollection, but the effort was vain, and with a wild laugh he gave up the attempt.

"You shall find in the son a protector equal to the father," said the earl. "That is, I will befriend you if you are indeed poor and friendless, as you would lead me to believe."

"Would lead me, my lord?" exclaimed Maxwell, indignantly. "Is this insult intentional? Have I not already told you that I am a gentleman? and are you so deficient in true gentle blood as to believe that a gentleman would tell a falsehood?"

"Pardon me again. You are so hasty that you mistake my meaning," replied the earl. "I was about to offer my services to you in any way most agreeable to yourself, and as I have a bottle of the finest Cognac in the pocket of my coat, I propose we stroll into the country and taste its contents. You can then tell me the nature of the protection my poor father extended to you, his motive for interesting himself in you, and any other little details which may occur to you, as I wish to follow my father's example in deserving cases."

"Really, my lord, your phrases irritate me exceedingly," said Maxwell. "Anyone would think you were the head of the parish holding open the workhouse gates for a 'deserving case,' and that I was the fortunate recipient of parochial relief. I repeat, I am a gentleman, and I hope that in your intercourse with me you will treat me as you would one of your own order. I have a strong inclination to refuse to have anything to do with you, but you have a most potent argument in your pocket, and one which in the present low state of my finances I am unable to resist."

"Thank you for your compliance, which I could wish was due more to a desire to cultivate my acquaintance than to a servile and degrading obedience to a detestable vice. That is how I should speak to any associate of mine, and I say it at the risk of offending you."

With a shrewdness that was habitual to him, the earl saw that the way to treat Maxwell, was by a

judicious mixture of terrorism and flattery, but that flattery alone would make him intractable. He also knew that he would not leave him as long as any spirit remained in the bottle.

"Come—your hand!" cried Maxwell, bursting into a laugh. "I like a man that's frank, and speaks his mind. You have hit upon my failing, if one it be, though the poets and the wits of the world have generally been fond of the bottle, not that I care myself for one or the other. It is true I have hit off verses that anyone need not be ashamed of, but I never finish anything; there is something incomplete about all I do. I am not thorough; my education is not finished. I was taken away from school when I was fifteen, and then—there came the days in the asylum. They said I was mad, and they did all they could to make me so, but it was God's good will that I should see one of the commissioners during his periodical visit, and he let me out at once, and sent me to Mr. Nodes, who communicated with his lordship, your noble father, and I was brought down here, where I have been ever since. But, touching this brandy, my dear good sir. Here is a place where a prince of the blood royal might get intoxicated without a murmur of reprobation. Produce the bottle. I will give the neck the gun-room tap, as they say in the navy, and the services of a corkscrew will not be required on this occasion."

He pointed as he spoke to a shed, which had evidently been erected for the shelter of some horses and cows grazing in the field into which the two men had strayed. In one corner were some trusses of straw, intended for fodder, but as yet untied. The shed was a welcome protection from the wind, and Maxwell threw himself upon a bundle of straw with a sigh of relief. His companion took a seat by his side, and handed him the bottle, at the same time giving him a corkscrew, with which he had provided himself. In an incredibly brief space of time, the cork was out, and the brandy gurgling through the neck of the bottle into Maxwell's mouth.

"It's your turn," he said, catching his breath, and wiping the water from his eyes, which the potency of the spirit had caused to arise. "The brandy's good, though I have drank better."

The Earl of Montargis humoured him by pretending to drink, though he scarcely moistened his lips, and Maxwell set the bottle upright in the straw by his side, paying it occasional attention.

"Who is this Mr. Nodes of whom you spoke?" enquired the earl.

"A lawyer," replied Maxwell. "That's not saying much for him, though he has sent me my allowance regularly on the first of the month, until lately. Perhaps your father's death may be the occasion of the stoppage of the supplies. However that is, I find it very awkward, for I have had no money these five days, and if it were not for the confiding nature of my landlady, I don't know what I should have done. She has supplied my wants, and I am grateful to the old creature."

"Have you any idea of the motive which prompted the earl, my father, to take an interest in you?" asked the representative of the house of Montargis. "I put the question to you, Mr. Maxwell, because, if I find that my father gave you an allowance through Mr. Nodes, I shall be most happy to continue it, as I do not wish anyone to suffer from his untimely decease."

"All I know is what Mr. Nodes has told me," replied Maxwell. "He says that my father and mother were tenants of the late earl, and that they both died raving mad. The doctors said that insanity was hereditary in the family. I can remember nothing, and though I was a little wild and unruly at school, I was not mad, as they declared. The sights I saw at the asylum for years were enough to deaden the intellect of any young man. The Earl of Montargis took a charitable interest in me. That is all I know. But what care I? Give me the smiling country, my freedom, and the means to purchase oblivion—that is another word for brandy, my lord—and enable me to forget the wretched years when I herded with the gibbering wrecks of humanity in the asylum; and I am as a king, and I believe a great deal more so, or I am mistaken in my notions of royalty, and old Will Shakespeare knew nothing about the matter when he sang 'uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.'"

The earl skilfully plied Maxwell with questions, but he could extract nothing more from him than what we have already related. He saw that he was a man of an indolent disposition, if not of weak intellect, and that his inordinate passion for drinking was slowly, but surely, and by easily perceptible degrees, softening his brain. That he knew nothing of his supposed parentage was apparent from the information he volunteered, and his replies to questions which were put to him. It followed, then, that he was only dangerous if he fell into Amanda's hands, and the earl resolved to remove him from the sphere of her pernicious influence without any delay.

He was an eccentric if not gifted fellow, utterly devoid of ambition, and was perfectly satisfied with being the oracle of a tap-room. Indeed he shone in such a position, and derived as much pleasure from it as if he had been in the House of Commons, an admired supporter of a popular faction.

Long before the earl quitted him, Maxwell was hopelessly inebriated. He sang snatches of songs, but he never finished anything he began; his memory failed him after he had got through a verse or two. He would begin a story and fly off at a tangent to some other subject before he had got half way with it. He was tolerably well educated, and it was clear that he had made the best use of his time while at school. If he could be weaned from his fatal vice of intoxication, he might become a respectable member of society, but that he would ever be a valuable one his indolence led the earl to doubt.

The effect of the brandy upon him was marked as it was speedy, and in less than two hours the earl left him fast asleep on the straw.

On the following day the earl went to London and had an interview with Mr. Nodes, the solicitor, who was glad to see him, and begged a continuation of the favours he had experienced from the late lord. This was readily promised, and the earl said:

"You will be good enough to let me have any claim there is outstanding against my father's estate. I may mention that the allowance to a Mr. Maxwell will be discontinued, as he is going abroad."

"Indeed," said Mr. Nodes. "Poor young fellow! he has but one fault, and that is intemperance, though he is suspected of hereditary insanity—I know not with what justice. He was the son of some tenant of your father's, I believe. I am but slightly acquainted with his history. He was put into an asylum and turned out as cured. After that your father had him down at Fonthills; but of course you are aware of all that. I used to pay him a small monthly sum, and whenever I came in contact with him I found him well behaved, though peculiar—undoubtedly peculiar."

"So I think," answered the earl, satisfied with this rejoinder, which showed him that Mr. Nodes, with all his acumen, knew nothing; and when he went away he began to have a suspicion that after all, Maxwell's identity with the lost son of Stanley Mayland might be a chimera of Amanda's brain.

Knowing her ambitious projects as he did, he feared her, and resolved not to give her a chance of injuring him. Maxwell might or might not be his cousin—he would go upon the presumption that he was, and that he had overthrew to fear from him.

On his return from London he again sought Maxwell, who had not entirely forgotten their last interview, and made some jocular remark about it. He was very much pressed for money, and the earl gave him a few pounds, thus establishing at once a claim upon his gratitude. When he had gained his confidence by this timely act of benevolence, he said:

"Do you not think, Mr. Maxwell, that it would be more satisfactory for you to obtain some sort of employment? You would not then be dependent on me. Not that I begrudge the stipend my father allowed you, but I feel sure that you must stand in need of occupation for the mind. Now, I have a little property in Scotland, only a farm in fact. It is called a shooting-box, and I am seldom there. If you would like to undertake the management of it at a salary to be hereafter agreed upon between us, I shall be very glad to place you in the position."

Maxwell at once agreed to this proposition. His mind had not been sufficiently capacious and alert to enable him to think of such a plan as this, but when it was once suggested to him he fell in love with it, and seemed delighted with the prospect of acquiring independence by his own industry.

To prevent him talking to any village gossips, the earl struck the iron while it was hot, and proposed they should start at once. Maxwell made no objection, and he waited in a roadside inn while a messenger was despatched to his landlady to pay what he owed, and bring the few things he had in an old leather portmanteau. The earl, who had gone back to the park to make his arrangements, joined him towards evening, and they went together to the station, travelled along a branch line until they reached a junction, when they caught the mail train for the North. Maxwell was happy with a flask of brandy and a case of cigars. He little knew where he was going, or what was going to happen on his arrival at his destination, and his disposition was so happy and thoughtless that he did not bestow a moment's consideration on his future.

The Earl of Montargis sat opposite him, in a comfortable compartment of a first-class carriage. He, also, was smoking, and he smiled complacently over the cigar he held in his mouth as he reflected on his plans in respect to Maxwell, and congratulated himself upon the ease with which he had lured him to fall into the trap he had laid for him.

CHAPTER XXI.

They found the doors securely barred,
They found the watch-dog in the yard,
There was no footprint in the grass,
And none had seen the stranger pass.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang,
I have read, in the marvellous heart of man,
That strange and mystic scroll,
That an army of phantoms met and van,
Besieger the human soul.
Encamped beside Life's rushing stream,
In Fancy's misty light,
Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam
Portentous through the night.

Voices of the Night.

A VERY wild, weird, and ghostly place was the old Ivy Tower in which Amanda and Mrs. Blarid took up their abode. They engaged but few servants, for though Amanda would have liked to make a great show in the country, she was completely held in thrall by the old woman, who, if her will was disputed for a moment, threatened to make terms with her enemies, and denounce her to the Countess of Montargis. This threat was sufficient to induce Amanda to cultivate the virtue of obedience; but if ever anybody was a homicide in heart, she was one. Had she not been afraid of detection, an subsequent punishment, she would have gladly rid herself of such a crushing incubus upon her.

It is said that crime always brings its reward with it in this world. It was so in her case, for she could not enjoy the money of which she had deprived the countess and her daughter. She was obliged, in obedience to the will of Blarid, to live in the simplest way; though if she had followed her own inclination, she would have enjoyed every luxury, and have made a brilliant dash in society with her large fortune. Her only consolation was in wandering about the winding passages, and up and down the narrow staircases with which the Tower abounded; looking down upon the moat, wondering how deep were its muddy waters, and then gazing afar off across the plain; seeing stretched before her that pleasant valley in which her childhood was passed, and following the winding river, and resting her eyes at last upon the dimly visible pile of buildings called Montargis Park, where resided the man she loved, and upon whom she depended to realise the darling wish of her heart, and make her a countess.

The realisation of this wish seemed farther off than ever, now that she was shut up in the odious and solitary Tower with Blarid, who treated her as a menial, and frequently indulged her caprices by making her wait upon her. In the evening Blarid would sit in state in a curiously carved oak chair before a fire in the long drawing-room. She would sometimes make Amanda read aloud to her, and at others she would make her play and sing, to beguile her weariness and soothe her off to sleep. Not a friend in the world had Amanda. She had separated herself from her family from the first moment she had entered the family of Montargis; and though she had called at John Short's house, at Nunington, since her accession to a fortune, both he and her father had refused to see her. The fact was reports to her prejudice were already rife in the neighbourhood. It was said that she had used undue influence with the old peer to induce him to make her his heir, and some spoke openly of forgery. So her intercourse with her family was cut off, and she was made to trust more than ever to her own resources. Alone and unaided she had embarked upon a perilous career—alone and unaided she must go through with it. Nor did she flinch from the task before her, so strong and adamant were her nerves and her indomitable will.

Deeds of violence and acts of wickedness are fostered by solitary musing, and a desire to remove Blarid from her path for ever grew in Amanda's mind daily, acquiring fresh force hour by hour. Her tyrannical conduct, her insolent behaviour, her want of intellectual and social culture, all combined to make Amanda hate her with a power which drove her to extreme measures. Harp continually on one string, and it will break. So it was with Amanda. She was a slave to the most unamiable of task-mistresses, and the servitude was so hateful and unendurable that it embittered her very soul. At last she overcame her repugnance to the crime she had brooded over and merely waited for an opportunity. She might as well be in prison as be shut up in the Tower with Blarid. There would, in a goal, be very little difference in her position. Now she could not spend the money for which she had sinned; nor could she meet the young and handsome Earl of Montargis, whom it maddened her to fancy basking in the smiles of the lovely and accomplished offspring of a noble race, the fair and radiant Lady Constance Boverley.

The Tower had its legend; once it had been the property of the Montargis family. They had sold it a century ago, and it had been occupied by various tenants, some of whom inhabited it long. There were strange tales told of subterranean passages

connecting it with the ruins of an abbey some distance off. In the wild and lawless days of old a Baron of Montargis had accused his lady of unfaithfulness and stabbed her to the heart. She was proved innocent, and in despair he shut himself within the walls of the Tower, in which the crime had been committed, until he was found dead by his own hand, the victim of remorse; and ever since then the spirits of the lady and her husband had walked at night and had been repeatedly visible, it was alleged, to the inhabitants of the Tower.

To the vigorous mind of Amanda this was but an old wife's story, though the precincts of the Tower were ghostly enough in all conscience, and a vivid imagination would, after a short residence there, find supernatural terrors enough to haunt him for the remainder of his existence.

One evening, a week or two after Christmas, Amanda was performing her usual drudgery and reading a book of fairy tales, which Blarid had selected to be amused with. The wind was rough and boisterous without, and at intervals would dash against the wooden shutters, making them clash and rattle dismally. The watch-dog bayed in the court-yard, an old-fashioned clock loudly ticked the minutes, and an oil lamp cast a flickering light into the corners of the long, narrow room.

Suddenly the door was thrown open, and the figure of a lady, wearing a long, loose white robe, fastened round the waist with a piece of cord, appeared on the threshold.

Her face was very ghastly, and her features bore a remarkable resemblance to the present Countess of Montargis. At least Amanda fancied so, though her power of observation was limited, as the draught admitted by the open door extinguished the lamp, and the room was only lighted by the garish glare of the fire, which now burned brightly with a steady yellow flame and anon faintly flickered.

The strange intruder on the privacy of the inmates of the Tower advanced to the middle of the room with one arm extended threateningly, and paused near Blarid, assuming an attitude of denunciation, much to the consternation of the old woman.

All the tales she had heard respecting the evil reputation of the Tower now rushed into her mind, covering it with superstitious terror as with a flood, and she cowered down in her chair, paralysed with fright.

Upon Amanda the effect was not so marked, though for a moment her heart stood still and she was too much terrified to be able to move.

"Confess! confess! Your time draws near!" cried the apparition, in a harsh, sepulchral voice, the tones of which Amanda thought were familiar to her.

Blarid stretched out her hand towards Amanda and tried to speak, but her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth. What she would have said it is not easy to conjecture, but her fright effectually impeded her power of utterance, and at last she sank upon the floor completely overcome, uttered a groan, and fell into insensibility.

The spectre, if such it was, retreated slowly towards the door, after casting a warning look upon Amanda, who, just at the moment, could not recover from the astonishment with which this novel scene had overcome her, but as the white-robed lady reached the extremity of the room, she threw off the oppression which weighed upon her, and, with an hysterical cry, ran to the door and into the passage, where darkness reigned supreme.

Her only course was to light the lamp, which she did with some trouble, and with it in her hand she pursued the mysterious phantom, without finding any trace of her. It was in vain that she questioned the servants, who stared blankly at one another, and trembled at the bare supposition of an apparition, though it was, they said, only what they had expected all along. One of the housemaids gave warning on the spot, and terror reigned in the servants' hall as it did above stairs. The domestics were agreed upon one thing, and that was, that nobody had entered the Tower by the ordinary way. The drawbridge was up, the watch-dog in the yard, and the door securely barred and fastened.

Much perplexed, Amanda returned to the drawing-room, to attend to Blarid, who was beginning to recover from her swoon. Her alarm was intense, for she felt persuaded that she had seen an actual ghost, and that its words were prophetic.

"I've had such a shock as I shall never get over," said she, with a weary sigh. "It's wrong of me to help you to keep that money, and if I don't tell the countess all about it before I die what will become of me? The dead can't rest in their graves."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Amanda. "It's some trick, and I believe the servants know more about it than they care to tell. Let the spirit, as you think it, come again. I'll be prepared for it next time, and if it is aught of flesh and blood it shall repent its temerity."

"There's nothing for it but to confess," replied Blarid, who was in very low spirits and a weak

state of mind. "That's what it said, 'Confess! confess!' I can hear the words ringing in my ears now. It's a warning, and one I dare not disobey. To-morrow I'll go to the park, and make a full confession. They will provide for me for life. I shall have nothing on my mind, and you must do what you can."

Here was a new danger for Amanda, and one she had not anticipated. Her efforts were fruitless to make the superstitious old woman reconsider her determination. She had come to the conclusion that the only way to secure peace on earth and happiness hereafter was to unburden her mind of that dead weight which lay upon it, do an act of justice, and dissociate herself from any further intercourse with a criminal so desperate as to make disembodied spirits war against her.

Amanda could not rest that night. If Blarid reached the park in the mood for confession, all was lost. She must be prevented from taking the course, at all hazards. But how? that was the embarrassing question which Amanda put to herself a hundred times, as she tossed restlessly on her bed, with sleepless eyes and a beating heart.

"If she attempts to betray me, as I believe she will," said Amanda, to herself, "she will find that the spirit, or whatever it was, spoke the truth; her end draws near if she leaves the Tower for Montargis Park. I will follow her, and may Heaven have mercy upon her if I do, for I can show her none!"

It was in this awful state of mind that Amanda rose the next day, hot and feverish, her brow throbbing, and her eyes heavy and bloodshot, her face haggard, and showing by her general appearance the disquietude of her mind. Blarid ate no breakfast, and returned short answers when spoken to. At ten o'clock she dressed herself in her best, at half-past the drawbridge was lowered, and she walked across the fields in the direction of Montargis Park, which was between five and six miles distant.

Five minutes afterwards Amanda followed her, taking the same path, and going at a quick pace, as if she was desirous of overtaking somebody before any great distance could be traversed.

(To be continued.)

THE GIRL OF CAPE RACE.

FAIR winds had followed and wafted on the good ship since she lifted her cable and put to sea. All the water-sprites appeared to have been propitiated, and even the mighty god Neptune to have been caught napping when they crossed his dominions. But yet the passengers upon the *La Belle Eugenie* were not to escape without feeling the power that slumbers at times in the tempest and the waves.

In the midst of a dense fog—so dense that, to use the expression of an old sea-dog who was throwing the lead, "you might have cut it up in chunks and stowed it below"—they were running in the vicinity of Cape Race. It was a very dark night, blowing a full gale, and the sails were double reefed, yet still the stout ship dashed onward, enveloped from her bow to midships in a cloud of foam, driving, as it appeared, to certain destruction. For two days the sun had been obscured, the nights moonless and starless, and no observations could possibly be taken.

The captain, calm as he endeavoured to appear, was in a state of intense excitement. Everything depended on him—the safety of the vessel—the safety of every soul on board. That he had been caught in the "line storm" he was perfectly aware, but in what precise locality he was he had but little more idea than the most ignorant landsman on board, for dead reckoning is never reliable, and the currents around Cape Race strong.

This want of knowledge had prompted him to make the best possible preparations in case of disaster. That accomplished, he had nothing to do but abide the result, and looking round upon the terror-stricken ones, his eyes rested upon the figure of a girl—a mere child, that was clinging to a rope at the foot of the mizenmast; and he hastened to her side.

"Leonie," he said, dropping one hand upon her uncovered head, and wiping away the salt spray from her long black hair. "Leonie, what are you doing on deck? Why did you not remain below?"

"I could not stay below," she answered, looking up into his face with eyes that were even blacker than her hair—strange, weird-looking eyes that contrasted strikingly with the slender form and pale face. "I could not stay below, captain, among the groaning, shrieking men and women. Just to think of a man being afraid!" and her lip curled with the most bitter scorn.

"Are you not afraid, child?"

"Afraid of what?"

"The sea, the tempest, the almost certainty of being swallowed up."

"No, I am not afraid. I love it."

There was but one solution for such a state of

feeling in one so young that the captain could possibly think of, and that was that she did not understand her danger. Early orphaned by the treacherous element that was now battling with the strong oak and iron, she had been placed in his charge to bring to friends in England, and his heart went out in love for her, and he endeavoured to explain the danger and prepare her for the worst.

But it was of no avail. She laughed when the tempest whistled the loudest, and clapped her hands for merry glee when a wave, more violent than the rest, reared its crest above the ship and threatened to break in fury upon and sweep everyone from the decks.

"Heaven help that child!" murmured the warm-hearted sailor, as he was called away. "Heaven help her! She is unlike anyone I ever saw."

The line of his duty had nearly run out—there were but very few fathoms remaining. In an instant after, the ship struck, and was grinding its bottom to splinters upon the sharp, ragged rocks. The wildest confusion reigned on board. Shrieks, and groans, and prayers, arose commingled, and even strong men gave way to despair.

In a brief interval between the launching of the boats (that would only prove coffins, for it was worse than folly to think of their living in such a whirling, hissing, tempestuous sea), the captain glanced around for his little favourite. She was still standing as when he had parted from her—still with untrembling lip, uncovered form, and tearless eyes—at once a wonder and a mystery.

Once more he turned his head away for an instant, and when he looked again her place was vacant—she was gone. A great wave had swept over the ship and carried with it many a one into eternity. The fog had lifted, been somewhat blown away by the fierce winds, and the mad waves were strewn with broken spars and everything that had been loose upon the decks; but of the girl, the poor orphaned one, there was neither a token nor a trace remaining.

The morning light revealed to the watchers upon the shore the debris of the wreck. For many miles it was strewn along, mingled with corpses—a sad, sorrowful sight, and yet one that brought something of wealth to many a fisherman's cabin. Of the scores that had been buoyant with life but a few brief hours before, there was only one remaining. All the rest of the crew had been hurled to swift destruction.

And that one was the strange girl that had laughed at the tempest's might and the power of the waters. Swept overboard, she had clung to and raised herself upon some floating planks, which had borne her feather-weight, and at last brought her safely to the shore. But, more than half dead, she had been carried by the fisherman who discovered her to his humble cabin, and it was hours before she was fully restored to consciousness.

Almost any nature would have shrunk from the ocean and its terrible storms after such a trial, but she did not. It was her delight to wander along the shores and listen to the plaintive sobbing of the waters, watch the breakers as they were lashed into foam upon the submerged rocks, and listen to the howling winds that seemed to breathe of destruction. And day and night were the same to her. In the darkest, most tempestuous hours she wandered as boldly as in the brightest sunshine, as if she defied the power of the elements.

To the simple-minded fisherman and his wife she was a sad puzzle, and they looked upon her with awe—looked upon her as something more than mortal, and after a very brief questioning, to which she replied only with her quiet black eyes, she was permitted to take her own course. And that strong will of hers prompted her to go with her preserver in his little boat, and while he tended his lines, she leaned over the rocking waters and talked in low whispers, as if holding communion with spirits that dwelt beneath.

"That girl—that Leonie, as she calls herself," said honest and superstitious John Martin, in confidence to his wife, "is not human. I know she is not. She is nothing but a mermaid that has changed shape somehow, and come on shore, for she is always a-talking to someone under the sea. And some day she will leave us as suddenly as she came, you take my word for it. I shouldn't wonder if it was her that lured that ship on to the point of the Cape by swimming around with a false light."

And this came to be the commonly received opinion, and she was shunned by the old and feared by the young, even to the good old minister, although he could not but acknowledge to himself that there was not a girl in the whole circle of his acquaintance, even of twice her age, that had one tithe of her talent, education, and accomplishments.

But Leonie either knew not or cared nothing for the thoughts of others. She assisted the wife of the fisherman in the household duties, wove for her curious embroidery, and was remarkably skillful with the needle. When winter came, she sat upon

a low stool by the side of Martin, learned to make nets, and very soon outdid him in the art to which he had devoted a lifetime.

Still they could gain nothing of her confidence. When asked concerning her relatives, and whether she would not like to see them, she had but one reply.

"They were under the sea," she answered, in the saddest of voices, "and it would not be long before she would go to them."

This more than ever confirmed the fisherman and his wife in their opinion of her submarine birth, and though they prayed long and earnestly that the good Lord would take her into his holy keeping and baffle the fiends of the water, they had but little faith in their own petitions, and expected some day to see her resume her original shape of half fish and half woman, and float away from them, combing her long hair with a golden comb!

But months passed, and no change came to Leonie, save that she became still more beautiful and reticent, and that she wandered still more frequently by the shore and sang songs, sad songs, in, to them, an unknown tongue. But custom had made them familiar with her ways—and they put no check upon her. She still went fishing with honest John Martin, still clambered high up the rocks and listened to the sullen roar of the breakers, still talked to the unseen ones that floated in the shadowy depths beneath.

But one night he came back alone, shivering like a man with the palsy, white as one who had seen a ghost, and with hair erect from fear.

"In the name of goodness," asked his wife, as he came rushing into the cabin and fell heavily upon the floor; "in the name of goodness, John, what is the matter?"

"Leonie!" was all that he could gasp.

"What of the girl? Where is she?"

"Gone. May the good Lord have mercy upon her soul, if she had one—gone!"

The wife assisted her husband to a chair, brought him some water, and by degrees the story came out.

His boat had been anchored upon the outer reef—he had stayed later than was usual, when his attention was suddenly called to the girl. She was bent far over the gunwale and talking earnestly. Her form was trembling with excitement, her hair floating wildly around her shoulders, her eyes flashing vividly. He spoke to her, called her by name, but she gave no answer. Then, even as he was thinking of going to her, she arose suddenly, shouted "I am coming," and plunged into the waves—never to rise again.

"She has gone back to her home," he said, in conclusion. In his confusion of mind he was almost ready to affirm he had seen the lower part of her body change into a dolphin.

Poor old man! For a long time he never heard strange noises arising from the ocean but he said they were the voice of Leonie, and it required many years to banish the superstition.

They had not wisdom enough to fathom the mystery—not learning enough to understand that the mind, when brooding for a long time upon one idea, becomes awayed from its balance, and that the young girl, after the loss of her parents in the ocean, had, in her sorrow for them, been led at last to the belief that they were waiting for and calling her there, and at length, in a moment of semi-delirium, leaped into the waves, fancying it would be into their outstretched arms.

Yet so it was, and as the sea never gave up the dead, they remained firm in their superstitious belief, and no grave was ever dug or stone raised for "Leonie, the girl of Cape Race." W. H. B.

THE GUILTY WITNESS.

CHAPTER I.

It was a lovely morning, late in October. Alice Hartwell, a beautiful girl of eighteen, and the daughter of a wealthy merchant, had just seated herself at the piano, when the door bell rang, and the servant ushered her most intimate friend, Clara Manson, into the drawing-room.

In a moment the two girls were clasped in each other's arms, and a profusion of kisses were bestowed by each upon the other.

"I'm so glad you have returned, Alice," said Clara, "for I've been so lonesome since you've been away that I did not know what to do with myself."

"And I am happy to see you again, Clara, and I assure you that a glance at your charming face has already banished the pain of parting with new friends," said Alice, with a smile, gazing admiringly upon her lovely friend.

Here let us glance hastily at the two girls. Alice Hartwell was tall, dark, and exceedingly beautiful; while Clara would not be called handsome; yet there was something in her clear blue eye, and its eloquent look, that impressed the beholder that she

was lovely. She was rather short of stature, and exactly the opposite of her friend. It was strange that two girls so unlike should become such fast friends.

"Well, Alice, how have you enjoyed yourself since you have been away, and what have you been doing all this long time?" enquired Clara.

"Oh, Clara, I've had the happiest time that I ever had," said Alice. "I'll tell you all about it. While at Torquay I saw the handsomest man that ever you saw in your life. I was with my cousin at the time, and she said that it was a case of love at first sight; and really, Clara, I think so too; for he kept looking at me, and I could not help looking at him, and finally that torment of a cousin tried to plague me. I did not have an introduction to him, for I came away a few days after; but, Clara, I've just received a letter from him, and it's full of undying love; and he says his heart will break if I do not give him a favourable answer. Now, what would you do?"

"Do your father and mother know that you have received a letter from him?" inquired Clara.

"No! I would not have them know of it for the world!" exclaimed Alice.

"You will not answer, Alice, without their permission?" interrogated Clara.

"Yes, I rather think I shall, Clara; for I think he's as handsome as he can be; and I know he is really in love with me."

"But it would not be right, Alice, for you to answer without your parents' consent."

"Oh! they won't know anything about it if you don't tell them; and I am quite sure there can be no harm in it, for it is only in fun; besides, he writes that he is coming here soon, and if I will only give him a favourable reply, he will call and see me; and I want to form his acquaintance so much!"

"He may be handsome, but I don't believe he is half as good as George Belmont, who, you know, thinks so much of you," said Clara.

"George Belmont isn't to be compared with Henry Wilton, for that is the name he alludes to in his epistle of love," said Alice Hartwell. "Here is his carte, too, Clara, that he sends me. See, he has black curly hair, dark eyes and moustache. Isn't he splendid?" she asked, passing the carte for Clara to inspect.

"I do not see anything remarkable about him, but there is something about him I do not like," said Clara.

At this moment Mr. Hartwell entered the drawing-room, and all further conversation upon the subject closed for the present.

CHAPTER II.

THE correspondence between Alice Hartwell and Henry Wilton was continued until the latter came to town, and then he became a frequent visitor at the residence of Mr. Hartwell.

It was her father's choice that Alice should marry George Belmont, a young man in his employ, who he intended taking into business with him as junior partner.

One evening, several weeks after the conversation which we have related in the last chapter had occurred, Mr. Hartwell was returning home later than usual. It was a dark and cheerless night, and the few gaslights that here and there dotted the streets only served to make the darkness visible.

He had walked but a short distance, when he was startled by hearing his own name mentioned by two men in advance of him. He paused until satisfied that they did not know of his presence, and then followed on. At the corner of the street the men stopped, and he was able to approach them near enough to hear their conversation, which he was quite sure was for his interest to hear, especially as he recognised one of the voices as that belonging to Henry Wilton, and the low tone in which the conversation was carried on aroused his curiosity.

"It's a good scheme, Harry, if you can only carry it out as you have proposed," said the strange voice.

"No fear for that," he heard Henry Wilton say, "I've got the girl dead in love with me already; and as for her father, I can easily take care of him."

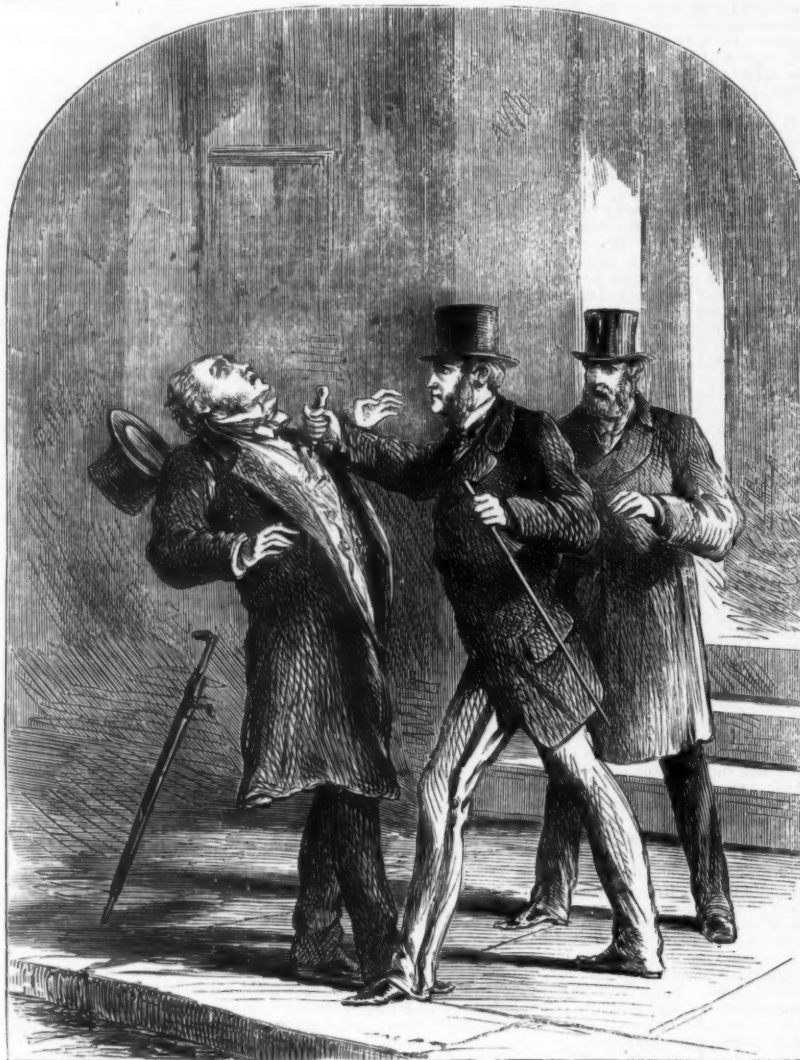
"Where did you fall in with—Alice, I believe you said her name was?" inquired the strange voice.

"At Torquay. I did not know then that her father was the wealthy man that he is, but was attracted by her personal appearance alone, and found out by a few inquiries who she was. I wrote to her and received a favourable reply, and since then matters have gone on quite smoothly."

"But suppose her father does not consent to your union with his daughter, what then?"

"He shall consent to it, or it will be the worse for him," said Wilton.

At these words Mr. Hartwell could restrain himself no longer, and springing in front of them, he shouted:



[THE ASSASSINATION.]

"Villain! How dare you talk so about my daughter? I forbid you ever to darken my door with your presence again!"

At first Henry Wilton was speechless with surprise, but he soon recovered himself, and pressing his finger upon a spring in the handle of his cane, he drew a glittering blade, saying, with an oath: "You shall die for this!"

He rushed upon Mr. Hartwell, and before the old man had time to defend himself, he plunged the blade to its handle in the bosom of Mr. Hartwell.

"Murder! murder! Help! help! Mur—" he shrieked, as he fell to the ground; and the villains fled.

Hearing the cry for help, George Belmont, who was passing by, hurried in the direction of the sounds of distress. Two men rushed past him, but it was so dark that he could not see who they were, and in a moment more he fell over the prostrate form of Mr. Hartwell. He groped about in the dark until his hand fell upon the handle of the sword cane. His first impulse was to draw it from the breast of the dying man, and as he did so two policemen came up; and turning the rays of a dark lantern upon the scene of blood, they beheld George Belmont standing over the murdered man, holding a dagger dripping with blood, as if about to plunge it again into the bosom of the dying man, and as the light fell upon the prostrate form, he exclaimed: "My God! It is my employer!"

"Murderer! We have you!" said one of the policemen, while the other dexterously slipped a pair of handcuffs upon his wrists.

In vain George told them he was not the murderer. It was of no use; the appearances were against him. A crowd collected, and he was hurried off to the police station; while others bore the dead body of Mr. Hartwell to his home. There we draw a veil over the sorrows of his weeping wife and

daughter, who were a few hours before happy in the enjoyment of his love.

CHAPTER III.

THE next day the excitement was intense; for Mr. Hartwell was a prominent man, and the foul murder of one of the most wealthy residents was a most startling occurrence. Already the people believed George Belmont guilty, and as the day of the trial drew near, it began to look dark indeed. With most persons, however, the trial was only a mere matter of form, but there were one or two exceptions. One of them was Charlie Emerson, a young lawyer, and friend of George Belmont, who had kindly volunteered to plead his case. Charlie Emerson was engaged to Clara Manson, who also believed George innocent; and there were also several others, who, knowing the previous good character which the prisoner had borne, still believed him innocent; but their number was limited to a few intimate friends.

At last the case was brought before the court. Witness after witness was examined, and the case began to grow darker and darker.

The clerks in the shop testified that Mr. Hartwell had had some private conversation with George in the counting-house upon the day of the murder, and that George had been overheard by one of them to say:

"You will regret this, Mr. Hartwell?"

The two policemen testified that they had heard cries for help, and had immediately started in the direction of the sounds, and that, upon their arrival there, had seen the prisoner standing over the body of the murdered man, holding the steel in his hand, as if about to plunge it again into the dying man.

Finally, Henry Wilton was called to the witness-box, and he testified that upon the night of the murder he had been standing under a gaslight, and had seen Mr. Hartwell pass, and, a few moments after,

the prisoner rushed past him, with a cane in his hand, and a short time after he had heard cries for help, and had arrived just in time to see the prisoner standing over Mr. Hartwell, with the dagger in his hand.

Charlie Emerson here claimed the privilege of questioning the witness.

"Witness, you say that upon the night of the murder of Mr. Hartwell you saw the prisoner at the bar pass you while standing under the gaslight. Now, will you please inform the court what the prisoner wore upon that night?"

Henry Wilton looked confused for a moment, but finally answered and said:

"He wore a suit of dark cloth."

"And now, witness, will you tell the court whether the prisoner wore gloves or not?"

"No, there were no gloves upon his hands," replied the witness, after a moment's hesitation.

"How do you know, witness, that the prisoner did not wear gloves?" inquired Charlie Emerson.

The eye of the witness at this moment rested upon a large seal ring that the prisoner wore, and he answered:

"I distinctly saw a ring upon his hand."

"Are you quite sure he did not have a glove upon the other hand, witness?"

"Yes; quite sure," was the reply.

"Are you acquainted with a man by the name of James Pratt, witness?"

"Yes," answered the witness, turning slightly pale, and glancing uneasily around.

"Were you not with him upon the night of the murder between the hours of nine and ten o'clock?"

"I was not," said the witness, with visible emotion.

"Will you please inform the court whose glove this is?" said Charlie Emerson, passing a glove for the witness to examine.

As his eye rested upon it the witness trembled violently, for there were stains of blood upon it, and he recognised it as one he had worn upon the night of the murder. Calling to his aid all the courage that he could command, he said:

"I do not know. I never saw it before!"

Henry Wilton was then dismissed, and another witness called, who proved that the glove was found in the dying grasp of the murdered man, while conveying him home.

The two policemen were recalled, and testified that when they arrested the prisoner he was clad in a suit of light clothes.

At this moment a boy entered the court room and handed Charlie Emerson a telegram, who, after reading it, arose and addressed the court as follows:

"May it please your honour and the gentlemen of the jury, I have just received a telegram informing me of the arrest of one James Pratt, who says that he saw the murder committed, and has offered to turn Queen's evidence. I, therefore, in behalf of the prisoner, petition this court for an adjournment until the arrival of this witness, and would also suggest that Henry Wilton, who has made several false statements, under oath, be held in custody until after the jury have returned their verdict."

The petition was granted, and the court adjourned until the following day, and a writ issued for the arrest of Henry Wilton; but he had fled from the court room at the first mention of the name of James Pratt. After several hours' search he was found and carried to the gaol.

The next day the trial was resumed.

James Pratt was brought before the court, and testified that he had been with Henry Wilton upon the night of the murder, and had seen him strike the deadly blow, and had fled with him. Afterwards Wilton had bribed him to disappear. He had started for London, and had been there until arrested by a detective who had been sent by Charlie Emerson for that purpose. He had immediately offered to turn Queen's evidence.

At the close of his testimony the prisoner was released, and Henry Wilton tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be hung until dead.

It is needless to add that he subsequently paid the penalty of his crime.

But little more remains to be told. It was through Clara Manson that Charlie Emerson had learned of Henry Wilton. She had remembered seeing him wear a glove like the one found in Mr. Hartwell's dying grasp, and had mentioned it to Charlie, who had immediately investigated the matter, and caused the arrest of James Pratt, as we have seen, and was thus enabled to save the life and honour of a dear friend.

Alice Hartwell still lives, but her folly has caused her many hours of remorse, and the loss of a dear father.

Several years later she became the wife of George Belmont, and at the same time Clara Manson and Charlie Emerson were also united.

A. B. M.



[THE COUNTESS RESCUED.]

THE VICTIM OF FATE.

CHAPTER III.

JULIAN DE VILLAROSA, as we must now call him, returned from the survey of the palace and its precincts, dazzled, bewildered, and excited. His brain was in a whirl, his imagination stimulated, his reason benumbed. At dinner he partook of delicate viands, and drank of wine that seemed nectar.

The countess herself pressed them on his acceptance, little thinking that she was developing tastes which she had far better have permitted to die out for want of culture.

It would have been better step by step to have initiated this fiery and passionate youth into the life of splendour to which he was destined. To plunge him at once into a sea of Capuan delights was to risk the wreck of his moral nature.

Something of this truth dawned upon his own mind, for he withdrew his hand as it was about to seize a flask of wine and fill the goblet before him, and he muttered:

"I have drank enough already. What need have I of stimulants? As the great German poet has said:

'Youth itself is intoxication, without wine.'

Duty before pleasure. Mother, I have a grateful task to perform. I must acquaint good Father Ambrose with my change of fortune. Will you grant me a few hours' absence?"

"You are your own master, count," replied his mother. "Your idea is a worthy one. Go to the good father. Tell him the Countess of Villarosa will never forget that he was for long years a father to her son. Take him this purse—not as a reward, not as a payment for service rendered, but as an earnest of what I mean to do for him in the future. Tell him that we shall always be honoured by his visits, and that the palace and all it contains are ever at his service, as if they were his own. More—that if he choose to be my chaplain and almoner, he shall be heartily welcome, and have princely entertainment beneath my roof."

Julian thanked the countess for her generous plans for the future of the good old priest, and departed on his errand.

The news of part of his adventure had preceded him to San Lucar, and he was enthusiastically welcomed by Paquita as the peer of Montero, though the old priest shook his head gravely at the praises she lavished on Julian.

But the old man's face grew graver yet when the young man said:

"I have something yet more wonderful to tell you. I left you this morning plain Pedro Ramon; I return Julian, Count of Villarosa. My mother has recognised me!"

And while Paquita was wrapp'd in ecstasy and admiration, the young adventurer related in detail all that had occurred to him after leaving the amphitheatre a victor, winding up by placing his mother's purse in the hands of his aged guardian, and delivering her message word for word.

When he had concluded his narrative, the old priest said:

"I accept this money, not for myself, but for the poor of my parish. For the invitation of the countess, tell her that I will often visit her for her sake and for yours—not to partake of her boundless hospitality, but as a humble counsellor and friend. And now, my son, give heed to my counsel. You are entering on a life full of temptation. The wealth you craved has suddenly become yours without an effort on your part. Wealth thus received is fraught with peril; it is the arm with which the enemy of mankind attacks the souls of men, objects of his incessant hate and pursuit. You come to me flushed with triumph, and alas! with wine. Take heed that you follow not in the footsteps of him whose blood flows in your veins. Be true to your better nature, and trample out evil passions as they rise, as your foot would crush serpents should they rear their heads to strike you in your pathway. And, when you need counsel, come to me. Even if you doubt my wisdom, you can never doubt my love. But if you come not to me, remember that I shall seek you with words of encouragement when your footsteps are in the right path, with words of warning when peril threatens, with words of bold denunciation should you ever pursue the career of the transgressor! And now farewell, child of my heart. The footsteps of the Spanish noble and the Spanish priest are widely divergent; but there is a bond of love that unites our hearts in one—is there not, Julian?"

Yielding to the tenderer emotion evidenced by these last words, the good priest embraced and blessed the young count, who passed from his arms into those of Paquita, who kissed him fondly and tearfully, thinking it might be the last time the poor priest's housekeeper could be thus familiar with the Castilian grandee.

Julian bore away from the priest's house words of good counsel which made a deep impression on him, and for a long time guided his steps, though he de-

nied himself none of the legitimate pleasures that belonged to his rank and fortune.

While he distinguished himself by the splendour of his dress, his equipages, and his horses, he was generous to the poor, even if such generosity cost him no self-sacrifice. He lived as if his mother's generosity were boundless, and she, idolising him, never checked his expenditure. Even when he began to manifest an excessive love for the pleasures of the table, when he sat late at his wine, she never reproached him, because his iron constitution and strong vitality enabled him to resist the effects of his indulgence until evil habits were insidiously formed and rooted.

But by degrees the young count was forming dangerous associations. Round a fortune like his, birds of prey constantly gather. Evil men, even with the snows of age on their heads, are ever ready to stimulate and gratify the passions of young men of ample means.

Julian craved for excitement. Wine and cards allured him, and, though he shunned them both at first, he insensibly yielded to their enticements. What matter whether he won or lost? He was rich enough to despise the anxiety of habitual gamblers. Gambling could never be more than a habit with him; he could abandon it at any moment. So have hundreds of thousands of lost men reasoned before him; so will hundreds of thousands reason after him. Thus the hereditary taint in his brain and blood was at work.

One night he sought for the first time a public gaming-table. He was tired of winning and losing with young men of his own rank, who could well afford to part with their money. He wanted to participate in the feverish strife waged by those with whom the green cloth is a battle-field for life and death—to whom the turn of a card or dice brings hope or despair; and he had long passed the period when he permitted anything like moral scruples to stand in the way of the gratification of a whim or a desire.

As he approached the door of the house where this business was carried on, he threw away the cigar he was smoking.

A stately, gray-headed man, wrapped in a cloak, and moving down the street with the proud step of a grandee, glanced furtively round him to see if he were observed, and then, stooping, picked up the half-smoked cigar, and placed it in his mouth. Julian smiled at this exhibition of combined shabbiness and dignity.

The stranger approached him. As he came nearer,

Julian observed that his cloak was shabby and napless, that his sombrero was worn, and his boots trodden down at heel and worn. A broken-down hidalgo was too common a sight, however, to challenge more than a passing glance, and so Julian turned into the arched doorway, and was preparing to ascend the staircase, when the stranger quickened his gait and stood before him.

"I beg pardon, señor," said the stranger; "but will you favour me with a minute's conversation?"

"I am in something of a hurry," answered Julian, impatiently.

"You are going up to try your luck?" said the stranger.

"It requires no conjuror to guess that," replied Julian, carelessly.

"You are young and inexperienced, señor," said the stranger, "and going among sharpers. Now, señor, I should be happy to aid you by my experience. I think I have an infallible secret for breaking the bank, and if you will only accept my services, I shall be quite content with a small percentage of your winnings."

"I thank you, señor," replied Julian, haughtily, "but I have not the least occasion for your services. Though I have the misfortune to be young, as you observed with great perspicuity, I am not quite so inexperienced as you appear to imagine. Moreover, it is immaterial to me whether I win or lose—my circumstances making me perfectly indifferent to the frowns or smiles of the fickle goddess Fortune."

"In that case," said the shabby-genteel don, "you are able to do me a great favour. I am a stranger, señor, just arrived in the city from Madrid. By a confounded mistake of my servant, my baggage had not reached the diligence when I left the capital. So you see me in this poverty-stricken dress, for it is absurd for even a nobleman to put on his best clothes for a ride across country night and day in a public conveyance. But the worst is not told. Our coach was attacked by brigands, and all the passengers rifled. I lost my gold watch, diamond rings, and money. Of course I despatched a courier to Madrid with tidings of my misfortune, and a remittance will reach me to-morrow. Until then, however, I am without money. Now, my kind señor, if you will oblige me with a trifling loan, I will repay you to-night, if I am lucky; if not, to-morrow noon at the very farthest. I will give you my name and references."

"Really," replied Julian, laughing, "you must have a very high idea of my intelligence. Your story is capital, old fellow, only it is old—in fact, like your cloak, worn threadbare. Were you begging for bread, I might listen to your appeal; but since you have confessed your purpose, I cannot consistently minister to your ruling passion. I advise you to finish my cigar (I am glad I had only just lighted it when I threw it away), go to bed, and possess your soul in patience till your trunk and your remittance arrive. Good night."

A blank look of despair blanched the face of the mendicant at first, followed by a fierce expression that lit up his blood-shot eyes as he listened to the sneers of the young noble. Once he made a convulsive motion with his hand beneath his cloak, and advanced a step forward, as if he would have avenged the taunts by a stab; but, if such was his purpose, he controlled himself, and replied:

"Go your ways, young man. You have guessed rightly. Gambling was my ruin—look to it that it be not yours. Remember this, that the bank always wins. You are proud of your money, and health, and gay apparel—but the day will come when you will be as old, and penniless, and shabby as I am, unless a pistol ends your career, as it ought to have ended mine long ago."

Turning on his heel with a stately salute, and drawing his cloak closely round his throat, the ruined gambler stalked moodily away.

"He laughs 'that wins,'" said Julian, gaily, and he was again turning to ascend the staircase, when a man wearing the black cloak and huge shovel-hat of the Spanish priest emerged from the shadows of the hall and barred his passage.

"What now?" exclaimed Julian. "It seems fated that I am to-night to be beset with gentlemen in black cloaks."

"Young man, whither are you going?" asked the familiar voice of Father Ambrose.

"Upstairs, if you will permit me," replied the young man, with assumed assurance.

"And what to do?" continued the priest.

"To amuse myself," replied the count.

"Do not banter with me," said the priest. "I know the den of perdition you are hastening to."

"Then, if you knew," replied Julian, "your question was superfluous."

"Unhappy young man," replied the priest, "I had a lingering hope that you were not aware that it was a haunt of infamy. I tried to believe that you came hither from idle curiosity, not knowing that this

place was what even its infatuated victims themselves rightly call a gambling-house."

"I will not disguise from you," answered Julian, "that I did know its character, and knowing it, came hither deliberately. I am no coward."

"I know it, Julian—I know that you are brave as steel. All your good qualities I willingly admit. But I know, too, that in your bosom are a spirit of good and a spirit of evil perpetually at war. The evil is inherited, the good is all your own."

"My good father," said Julian, impatiently, "I pray you to select some fitter opportunity for your discourse. There is a time for all things. On a fitting occasion I will listen patiently, and I trust profitably, to your homily. But I came hither for another purpose. I hear the clink of gold and the rattle of dice going on above, and I am eager to take part in the sport."

"Let me, then, address your worldly nature, Julian," said the priest. "Are you not rich already?"

"The very fact makes me proof against the dangers of gambling."

"You reason like one who knows nothing of the world," said the priest. "The gaming-table, like the sea, has the capacity of engulphing the wealth of the world. Could we explore the bed of the ocean we should find it strewn with gold and gems of inestimable value; yet all this lost affluence is but the tithe of what has been staked and lost at games of chance."

"There may be hazards for others—not for me, good father. Stand aside, if you please, and let me pass."

"You shall not pass," said the priest, firmly, "unless you trample on my prostrate body. The soldier of the Cross is as true to his post as the soldier of the sword. Here I stand sentinel, and in that sign wave you back, and forbid you to pursue your purpose."

"What!" exclaimed Julian, laughing; "will you compel me to use gentle violence? I am very strong, good father, and you would be but a feather in my hands."

"A word from my lips would paralyse your boasted strength," replied the priest. "Yet the word is so cruel that I hesitate to utter it."

Seeing that Julian persisted in attempting to remove him, Father Ambrose said:

"Then, in mercy to you, obdurate young man, I must speak out. Julian, the gray-headed mendicant, the victim of the vice you are acquiring, who begged you just now for a petty sum to stake at the table—the man you repulsed and ridiculed—"

"Well, what of him? Who was he?" interrupted Julian.

"Your own father, wretched boy!" was the terrible reply.

The young count uttered a low moan, and would have fallen, if the priest had not caught him in his arms.

"Poor boy!" he murmured, as he supported him. "It was cruel as the surgeon's knife, but like that, I used the desperate remedy for his son's best good."

Julian had no heart for gambling that night, at least.

CHAPTER IV.

At noon on the following day, the countess was informed by a servant that a gentleman desired to speak with her for a moment on a matter of business, and that he had been shown into the drawing-room. She hastened thither, and found herself face to face with a man who held his cloak in such a way as to conceal his countenance, but so soon as the visitor found himself alone with the lady, he dropped the mask, and revealed the features of her husband.

With an expression of blended indignation, repulsion, and scorn, the countess exclaimed:

"You here, in violation of your compact! What brings you here?"

The ruined count pointed to his soiled and threadbare garments, and replied, bitterly:

"Methinks these sordid rags might spare you the trouble of asking the question. I came to solicit charity, countess," said the count, extending his hand.

"I am a beggar now."

"The old story!" retorted the countess. "Money, money! Not to supply your wants, but to minister to your vices. I have no money for you!" and she turned away her face from him, at the same time pointing to the door.

The ruined count moved to the door, but it was only to turn the key in the lock, and place it in his pocket.

"Now," said he, with a deep oath, "wretched woman, you shall satisfy my demands!"

Her eyes flashing indignation, the lady sprang to the bell-rope, but quick as thought her husband, anticipating her purpose, prevented her giving the alarm, by drawing forth a broad, sharp knife and severing the cord. He then seized the countess's

arm in an iron grip, and raising his weapon, said, in the deep, low tone of fixed determination:

"See what it is to deal with a desperate man! Breathe but a sound above your breath—utter but a single cry, and this steel is sheathed in your cold heart. Marble though it is, this arm is strong enough to drive the blade through its stony casings. Now, be quick, give me what money you have about you; strip off your necklace and your rings! I must have all or nothing."

As the countess, now really terrified, hastened to comply with the demand, the hand of her assailant was seized, and the knife wrested from his grasp.

Julian, from the conservatory, had witnessed the assault, and, pushing open the glass door which gave access to the drawing-room, had come to the rescue of his mother with a bound.

Having disarmed the ruffian, he seized him by the throat.

"Hold, Julian!" said the countess. "Harm him not. Guilty, disgraced as he is, yet he is your father!"

"Hinder him not!" said the unhappy man. "Let the son finish what the mother has begun. You have abandoned me to poverty and shame; let him take my life if he will; it is worth little now."

There was a dead silence of some moments, first broken by the count, who, after surveying the young man from head to foot, said sarcastically:

"You have grown up finely, sir. You will not suspect me of flattery when I tell you that you are decidedly good-looking. So you have hunted him up, my good lady, and taken him into your good graces? Time was when you loathed him as you did me. But," he exclaimed, suddenly, as he scanned the features of Julian more sharply, "by St. Iago! we have met before, young gentleman, and only as lately as last night. Though we encountered in a dark hole, yet the light of my cigar fell on those features and brought them into strong relief, and I have a great memory for faces."

"You have met before?" cried the countess. "You did not tell me of this, Julian."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the elder Villarosa. "A good joke—father and son meeting after twenty years' separation without knowing each other. You see, countess, this young gentleman was going into a gambling-house—oh, he is true to his blood, my lady—and I tried to borrow a little money from him, but he scornfully denied me. You see he takes after both of us—with his father's love for the green cloth, and his mother's stinginess."

"Silence!" said the countess. "I forbid you to outrage my ears longer with your calumny and insults. Unhappy man, you have now placed yourself completely in my power; a murderous assault committed before a witness delivers you into the hands of the law."

"Excellent," said the old ruffian, rubbing his hands. "But tell me, countess, when the play is to begin? When is Julian, Count of Villarosa, Knight of the Golden Fleece, to be denounced by his good lady, Isabella, Countess of Villarosa, and condemned on the testimony of their son and heir, the young Count Julian?"

"I will tell you," replied the countess. "The first step of the tragedy shall be taken whenever you again intrude yourself on the presence of myself and son. You shall be arrested if to-morrow's sun finds you within the limits of this province."

"But I cannot travel without money."

"I will provide the means of your leaving Cadiz instantly," said the countess. "I do not fear, after what has occurred, that you will dare return to ask for more."

She took out her purse, and, extending it at arm's length, dropped it into her persecutor's lap.

The old count opened it, and counted the gold pieces one by one; then carefully put away the purse into the breast pocket of his shabby coat, and buttoned it.

"Quite a windfall," said he, coolly. "This will carry me far, and give me a chance of winning more. I understand you, good wife and dutiful son, to allow me until to-morrow morning to secure my retreat. You will not molest me until that time?"

"Go! go!" cried the countess, covering her eyes with one hand, while with the other she pointed to the door.

"I go," said the ruined noble, sternly and fiercely. "I go, vile woman. Never will my form darken your doors again, never will my voice ring in your ears again. But I leave my vengeance behind me in my living image. That son of yours, your now-found idol, will recall his father, not in face and figure and voice alone, but in all his vices. He is already treading in my footsteps; he will reach the goal that I have reached—beggary and crime. I need not leave you my malediction, for I leave you my son."

He quickly unlocked the door, glided through the

portal like a dark shadow, and was gone, never to return.

"Oh, Julian!" cried the countess, falling into the arms of her son, who had stood mute and paralysed during the latter part of this trying scene, "promise me that your life shall falsify the predictions of that bad man. If you fall, it will surely be my death!"

Solemn were the vows and earnest the assurances that Julian gave his mother. Alas! they were uttered too late. His hereditary instincts were too strong for his better resolutions.

Julian struggled with the inherited evil of his nature, but his strength was unequal to the combat. Even after he was vanquished, he strove successfully for a time to hide his faults from his mother, but finally the truth dawned upon her.

Then came agonising scenes, remonstrances on her part, promises on his, temporary reform, deeper lapses.

One night, over wine and cards, he grossly insulted the Marquis of Santa Clara, was challenged, and the next morning went out to fight him with a dizzy head and shaking nerves.

As the sun gilded the summits of a clump of gray-leaved olives on a lonely hill some distance from the city, Julian stood, stripped to his shirt, with a rapier in his hand, listening sullenly to the whispered counsels of his second, a young and dissipated noble of Cadiz.

Confronting him, at some distance, his antagonist was playing with his sword, tossing it high into the air, and dexterously catching it by the hilt as it fell.

A surgeon, smoking a cigar, was sitting on an ominous-looking box, containing the tools of his profession.

"It is useless to urge me farther," replied Julian to his friend. "I will not apologise."

"Santa Clara is a dangerous swordsman," objected his friend.

"After that remark I wouldn't apologise if I were doubly wrong," rejoined Julian. "It would ruin my reputation."

At that moment a well-known personage appeared on the scene—the priest of St. Luke's.

He approached Julian, and signed to his second to leave them together.

"Unhappy young man," he said, "in spite of all my warnings, you are resolved on rushing to perdition here and hereafter. A confirmed gambler, like your wretched father, you now stand on the brink of murder."

"The real culprit stands yonder," replied Julian; "the challenge came from him."

"But the provocation from you," retorted the priest. "Little skilled as I am in quarrels of this nature, which my soul abhors, I have yet inquired, and have learned that when you were not yourself, by reason of excessive indulgence, you insulted, and even struck, yonder young man."

"I am here to answer for it," replied Julian, moodily.

The priest hastened over the field to the marquis, and after a few moments' conversation with him, came back to young Villarosa.

"All the marquis requires from you," he said, "is that you will declare, in the presence of witnesses, that you regret what you said and did to him last evening."

"All!" repeated Julian, sarcastically. "But that all is more than my lips will ever utter. I have received the proposition once, and rejected it."

"Oh, Julian, my son," implored the old man, "I no longer threaten or command you, but I conjure you, by the love you once bore me, by the love of your distracted mother, whom you have all but killed already, to forego your deadly purpose."

"It is too late," said Julian, sternly, as he motioned the priest to step aside. "I am ready, gentlemen," and Julian advanced to meet his antagonist.

In an instant the shining blades were engaged, and a desperate encounter followed.

Julian had been thoroughly trained to arms, and was a master of the sword; but the marquis was equally skilful, and had been in constant practice, while his antagonist had not touched a foil for months. Moreover, the marquis came upon the ground with a cool, clear head; Julian with a dizzy brain and unstrung nerves.

More than once the point of his adversary's sword drew blood, but this, instead of giving him caution, infuriated him.

With the loss of his temper he lost his chances, and in a very few minutes a keen, sharp pain told him that he was severely wounded. In a second of time he lost his consciousness, and all that followed was a blank to him.

He woke within a darkened chamber. His chest and right arm were swathed with bandages. Ho

tried to raise himself in bed, but the effort was fruitless, and moreover a hand gently laid on his forehead pressed him back on his pillow, and the well-known voice of Father Ambrose said:

"Keep quiet, my son; the surgeon has enjoined it on you as the price of your life."

"At least, good father," said the sufferer, "bring me a mirror, that I may see how I look."

The priest held up a small hand-mirror before him.

Julian scarcely recognised the emaciated visage he beheld in the glass as his own.

"Can I have changed so much in a few hours?" he murmured, in a weak voice.

"A few hours!" replied the priest. "Alas! my son, you have lain here unconscious nearly four weeks."

"And my poor mother?"

"It is well with her," replied the priest.

Here the surgeon entered, and after inquiring carefully into the patient's condition, pronounced that the crisis had passed, and that only rest and quiet were needed for his recovery. He then, after prescribing a cooling draught, retired.

"But at least," said Julian, "I am strong enough now to see my mother."

"Your mother is not here," said the priest, soothingly. "She has been summoned hence, and I promised her to look after you in her absence."

Julian thought it strange that any business could have withdrawn his mother at such a time; but his brain was weak, and moreover, the medicine he had just taken disposed him irresistibly to sleep.

At last he recovered sufficiently to leave his bed-chamber, and was assisted into the drawing-room. Such of the servants as appeared from time to time looked sad and anxious, but respectfully expressed their gratification at his recovery.

The good priest was present to greet him.

"My mother not yet returned?" said Julian. "Has there been no letter received from her?"

"None—she cannot write."

"Cannot write? Then she is ill?"

"It is well with her," answered the priest, evasively.

"You look at me strangely," said the count. "Your voice trembles—there are tears in your eyes. What is this dreadful mystery? You are hiding something from me. I can bear anything but suspense. What has happened? If you are human, speak out and relieve my anxiety, or my death will lie at your door."

"Julian, my son," said the priest, solemnly, "tomorrow you will go with me to the chapel of St. Luke, and there we two will pray for the repose of the soul of Isabella, Countess of Villarosa."

"My mother dead!" shrieked Julian. "Oh! I am accursed!"

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

PROFESSORS Siliman and Wurtz have been investigating the effect of atmospheric air upon the illuminating power of gas, with the following results: "For any quantity of air less than 5 per cent. mixed with gas, the loss in candle power due to the addition of each 1 per cent. is a little over six-tenths of a candle (0.611 exactly); above that quantity the ratio of loss falls to half-candle power for each additional 1 per cent., the loss in illuminating power is nearly four-tenths of a candle for each 1 per cent. of air added to the gas. With less than one-fourth of atmospheric air, not quite 15 per cent. of the total illuminating power remains, and with between 30 and 40 per cent. it totally disappears.

THE SULTAN IRONCLAD.—Within a very few weeks another powerful ironclad vessel will have been completed at Chatham dockyard, in readiness for being floated out of dock, an order received from Whitehall directing that the Sultan, 12,526 tons, 1,200 horse-power, is to be undocked in the course of the ensuing month. Although the Sultan was only commenced in the month of August, 1868, and the first of her massive armour-plates bolted to her sides on the 12th of June last, so rapidly has she been pushed forward by the mechanics and other hands employed on her, that she will leave the dock in which she has been built with the whole of her 9-inch, 8-inch, and 6-inch broadside armour-plates bolted to her sides, and ready to proceed with her outfit for her first commission. In constructing the Sultan, Mr. E. J. Reed, C.B., her designer, has introduced the principle—now applied for the first time to an ironclad ship—of placing, in addition to her central main-deck battery, a battery on her upper deck, heavily armoured, and mounting two guns, of a size never yet carried by any vessel of our ironclad squadron so high out of the water. Hitherto it has been altogether impossible to open the

ports and cast loose the heavy main deck guns in anything like rough weather, a fact which was clearly demonstrated during the recent cruise with the Channel squadron, in which the only vessel that could fire its guns in the rough weather encountered was the Monarch, turret-ship. The armour-clad battery on the Sultan's upper deck enabled the 12½-ton guns with which the battery will be armed to be carried at a height of about fourteen feet out of the water, while each gun will command a clear sweep of 147 deg., from 53 deg. before the beam to a cross-fire at the stern. The Sultan is enabled to carry the upper-deck battery by not having the weight of armour which protects the stern guns of the Hercules, the Bellerophon, and others of our ironclad ships, by being immersed six inches deeper, and by the armour-belt being reduced in breadth to that extent.

TERRESTRIAL MAGNETISM.—The origin of terrestrial magnetism has been much disputed. In general it has been ascribed to variations of temperature on the surface and in the interior of the globe. But Dr. Meyer has recently emitted the hypothesis that the phenomenon is due to the trade winds, and is the result of the friction exerted by the air on the surface of the sea. Thus the air assumes an electrical condition the opposite of that of the water. It then rises under the warmth of the sun, and cold air from the pole rushing in beneath, drives it towards the pole, where from its high tension it produces the Aurora borealis. Owing to the physical conformation of the globe, the electric activity of the Southern Hemisphere is greater than that of the Northern, and hence there is a constant disturbance of electrical equilibrium, not only between the pole and the equator, but also between the North and South Poles.

HOW TO OBSERVE AN ECLIPSE AND SAVE YOUR EYES.—Take a large card with a small round hole in the centre, and hold it against the sun's rays, so that the shadow will fall on the floor, pavement, wall, or other dark and smooth surface. In the middle of the shadow there will be a true image of the sun, and the eclipse can be studied in its progress without straining the eyes, and without smutting face or hands with smoked glass. This simple process was suggested by the familiar circumstance that the light spots in the shadows, during a solar eclipse, take the shape of the luminous portions of the sun's disc, and the perforated card has been used with perfect success.

TURNING BY A NEW PROCESS.—A novel method of turning has lately been proposed, which requires notice for its extreme simplicity. Articles of copper, brass, &c., are first turned by the galvanised process, and they are then submitted to heat. The action of the heat, if sufficiently great, is to cause the tin deposited to combine with the foundation metal, and thus produce an alloy which is very lasting. Wire copper gauze, turned and afterwards treated in the manner above indicated, becomes covered with a superficial coating of green metal or bronze, and the meshes are firmly attached and soldered together in the same time. Brass articles or brass wire gauze becomes, in a similar manner, coated with brass. It is said that zinc, coated with tin in the galvano-plastic process, is more malleable when heated and soldered, better than zinc will do of itself, which will be recognised as a considerable advantage in connection with the latter metal, now so largely used for many purposes.

THE ROSS TELESCOPE.—Lord Rosse has been able to form an estimate of the relative amount of heat we receive from the moon and from the sun. He states, as the result of his observations, that the radiation from the moon is about the 900,000th part of that from the sun. But perhaps the most interesting result of the inquiry is the determination of the actual heat of the moon's surface at the time of full moon, or rather at lunar midday. By comparing the heat received from the moon with that derived from certain terrestrial sources of heat, Lord Rosse finds that the moon's surface must be heated to a temperature of 500 deg. Fahrenheit, or nearly 300 deg. above the boiling point! Nor is this result, startling as it seems at first sight, to be greatly wondered at, when we remember the circumstances under which the moon's surface is exposed to the solar rays. Fancy a day a fortnight long; not, as in our polar regions, with the sun only a few degrees above the horizon even at midday, but with an almost vertical sun for several days in succession. We know the intensity of the heat which prevails at noon in tropical countries, but that heat is a mere nothing compared with that which must prevail when, instead of a few hours, the sun hangs for five or six days close to the zenith, and pours down its rays on a surface unshielded by any atmosphere. And with respect to the effects of an atmosphere, let us not be misunderstood. It is well known that the intense heat of the tropical climate is not tempered, but increased, by the density of the atmosphere. On the Himalayan slopes, several thousand feet above the level of the

sea, an endurable if not a pleasant climate can be found, because of the rarity of the air. But the direct rays of the sun are hotter—paradoxical as it may sound—than the snow-covered summits of the Himalayas than at the sea level. Those who have travelled over snow-covered mountains in summer know well that, while the air may be cool and refreshing, the sun will be peeling the skin from hands and face incautiously exposed to his rays. Thus it is, doubtless, on the moon's surface, except that all the effects of the sun's heat are intensified, through the tremendous length of the lunar day, and the absolute absence of any lunar atmosphere. Indeed, Sir John Herschel, from theoretical considerations, was long since led to anticipate the results of Lord Rosse's researches. He remarked that "the surface of the full moon exposed to us must necessarily be very much heated, possibly to a degree much exceeding that of boiling water." The question of the moon's habitability by such creatures as subsist upon the earth is, of course, finally disposed of by Lord Rosse's discovery. We could not live conveniently at the temperature of boiling water, nor could any beings we know of. The famous salamander, even if it had all the properties assigned to it in olden times, instead of being one of the most cold-loving of all known creatures, would find the moon an unsatisfactory residence. For tremendous as is the heat of the lunar midday, the cold of the lunar night must be still more terrible. It has been well remarked by Tyndall, that were it not for the moisture with which our atmosphere is laden, the cold of a single night would bind our fields in a Siberian frost. Imagine, then, the effects of a night of three hundred hours in a region where there is neither moisture to form protecting envelopes of cloud or mist, nor an atmosphere to support such envelopes even if they could be formed. Doubtless the cold of the lunar night is of an intensity such as not even the most ingenious appliances of our chemists could produce. Under its influence not only would all known liquids be frozen, but probably every gas known to us would be converted into the solid form.

ELASTIC STEEL WHEELS.

For many years attempts have been made to substitute iron for wood in the manufacture of wheels, the advantages of the former material over the latter, as respects strength and durability, having been so fully recognised as to have led to a general desire for its adoption. Such attempts have hitherto invariably ended in failure, owing mainly to one cause—namely, the want of that elasticity in the iron which, in the wood wheel, enables it to sustain the constant vibration and concussive strains to which all wheels are subjected, without rapid deterioration.

Wrought iron, or even mild steel, is easily altered in form when affected by a continuation of suddenly applied strains; minute sets take place, which, at first imperceptible, ultimately lead to a serious weakening of wheels made of such material, their shapes alter, and the component parts become loose; to avoid these effects in some measure, large dimensions are resorted to, and this introduces another evil, that of excessive weight; elasticity in the wheel would enable it to yield to sudden strains without any permanent alteration of form, and would render useless the employment of such comparatively large masses in their construction as are necessary.

The want of elasticity in iron wheels also gives rise to increased resistance to draught; for an elastic wheel in some degree acts in the same way as springs, and assists the load in surmounting various obstacles. A metallic wheel, therefore, equally as elastic, or even more so, than a wood one, and of about the same weight, is a great desideratum; and it is confidently believed, that by means of a recent invention of Colonel Clark, R.A., Superintendent of the Carriage Department of the Royal Arsenal, it has been achieved.

His invention is extremely simple, and consists mainly in the employment of tempered steel spokes, made of the description and dimensions of steel used in the manufacture of cart and waggon springs, and tempered in the same way. They are fitted in pairs, each pair strutting apart as far as the nave will admit at the centre, and meeting at the Tee rim or felloe, to the web of which they are secured by the same bolt. It is evident the load, which is supported at the nave, will have a tendency to bow out the lower spokes, while the upper ones will be extended in tension; a sufficient number of spokes are employed, and likewise a sufficiently strong rim, to prevent objectionable or weakening distortion, and yet there is a sensible yield, which insures easy draught, great endurance, and an immunity from excessive weight.

A pair of 5ft. wheels on this principle, and suitable for a field artillery gun carriage, are now under trial, and will be severely tested by the Royal Artillery. Sufficient experience has already been gained with them in preliminary trials to lead to

the anticipation that they will prove so successful as to lead to their adoption into the service.

These wheels have naves consisting merely of short pieces of tube with flanges, to which the spokes are connected—one nave being of wrought iron and the other of gun metal; bouches of suitable material are let into their ends to form the bearings on the axle arms, the object of employing these bouches being to secure an easy and cheap means of renewal in case of wear—a point of considerable importance in field artillery equipments. The whole construction has been specially designed to meet the peculiar conditions inseparable from the use of field artillery carriages, but the principle admits of ready application to any form of nave and description of wheel.

A twelve-pounder rifled gun has been fired on the wheels now under trial; the carriage was placed on ground which would try the wheels to the utmost, and they stood admirably, and without the slightest permanent alteration of form.

EFFECT OF EXPOSURE ON GLASS WINDOWS.—We know that the surface of glass which contains soda undergoes considerable change after a lengthy exposure to the air. Bluish glass undergoes no such alteration; but that which has originally a greenish tinge becomes brown after a time; whilst very pure white deteriorates rapidly, showing first a yellow, then a brown, and finally a violet film. At this season of the year we do not require this additional colouring to the appearance of our already discoloured atmosphere. It has been noticed that some modern stained glass on a foggy day has almost the richness of the ancient. We need not go far for a solution of this. The old glass has acquired in the course of ages a film which takes the place of a permanent fog, especially on those colours which, like the ruby, are formed by a thin coating of the coloured glass on a thicker plate of transparent metal.

UTILISING WASTE HEAT.—Mr. E. Crowe, of Middlesbrough-on-Tees, employs a boiler of two horizontal tubes arranged one over the other, and connected by a number of upright tubes arranged at short distances apart along the horizontal tubes. The water-line of the boiler is at the diameter of the upper tube or thereabouts, and the boiler below this line is enclosed in a chamber of brickwork, into which, at one end, the products from the furnace enter, and which, at the other end, is connected with the chimney, so that the chamber is, in fact, the flue of the furnace. The sides of the chamber at the level of the vertical tubes are corrugated so as alternately to approach and recede from the vertical tubes, so that the draught is caused to pass in undulating direction. This causes it to impinge more effectually on the vertical pipes, and at the same time sufficient space is obtained for a man to pass through the chamber to clean it from time to time.

THE NEW TELEGRAPHIC ARRANGEMENTS.—A long shelf, divided into a number of compartments, has been erected in the money-order department of the Post-office, for the convenience of persons who wish to write telegrams on the spot. Senders can then affix the necessary amount in postage-stamps to the message, which will be received by a clerk and sent off immediately. The telegraph-office in Bristol, and no doubt other towns, will, we hear, be open night and day the whole year through for the receipt and transmission of messages. The Government authorities have prepared new forms for messages to be written on. A separate space in lines is allotted to each word, and the corresponding charge is printed clearly on the margin, so that the sender can see at a glance how much he has to pay, and the receiving-clerk need be at no trouble in calculating how much he has to charge. Each of the forms thus divided into spaces is prepared for a message of fifty words. In the right hand upper corner of the page a blank space is left for stamps, to cover the charge of transmission. Attached to the form are directions for the guidance of the sender, with a tariff of charges, and full information as to the arrangements for the postage.

LITERATURE FOR THE BLIND.

Or the many privations endured by the blind, and especially by those among them who have once enjoyed the power of vision, none are more acutely felt than their frequent inability to read and write. It is very difficult to realise, without the aid of painful experience, all that this inability implies. It is, we fear, inevitable that the blind should be cut off from any unassisted knowledge of current or ephemeral literature; but a movement has recently been set on foot which promises to be successful, and which has for its object to restore to them the works of great writers, and to give them improved and easy means of holding written communication with others.

Many methods have been tried more or less successfully; but the system of M. Braille, of Paris,

which is in general use in France, both for reading and writing, is rapidly becoming the universally written character of all civilised countries, except England. The symbols can be readily and perfectly produced by the blind by hand, and blind pupils, in the ordinary course of instruction, learn to decipher them by learning to form them. The blind can thus keep diaries and memoranda, make their own embossed books, and even carry on any correspondence of a private nature; because any one who had business to transact with a blind person would rapidly learn to decipher and to form the letters, far more readily, indeed, than people in general learn to use the finger alphabet with the deaf and dumb. The basis, or root form, of Braille's character is furnished by six dots

... arranged in three horizontal pairs; and every letter of the alphabet is represented by the omission of something from this root form. The omissions are regulated on the most simple system. For all the first ten letters, the two lower dots are omitted altogether, and each letter is formed by the two upper pairs, or by some further omissions from

them. Thus—B is represented by . C by . F by . H by . and so on. The next ten letters are formed by adding the left-hand dot of the lower pair to the former combinations, as : L, from B, . M, from C, . P, from F, and : R, from H.

The remaining letters require both dots of the lower pair, as : V, from B and L. The simpler forms, when standing alone, represent stops; and when following a particular prefix they represent figures. The same system is applied to music, and the arrangement is so simple that it can be very readily mastered by any person of ordinary intelligence. How far it may be accepted generally by the blind, as approving itself to their sense of touch, it would at present be premature to pronounce, but the reports of the Missouri School are sufficient to show that it is at least superior to all modifications of the Roman character. And unless some other system be found to surpass it greatly, of which there has hitherto been no suggestion, the facilities it affords for writing by the blind should entitle it to rank above all methods that do not offer the same advantage. For these facilities do not apply only to writing upon paper, but extend to the production of stereotype plates, which may be made by any blind person during the hours of leisure, and from which embossed books may be printed for the use of others.

For writing by this method, the scribe is provided with a plate of zinc, of any required size, having a surface grooved horizontally with twelve grooves to an inch, and surrounded by a frame like that of a common slate. A sheet of paper is placed on the zinc plate and secured, and is then crossed by a slip of thin metal, cut into two horizontal rows of oblong openings. Each opening is of the proper size to contain the six dots of the root form of the character. It is a quarter of an inch in vertical measurement, so as to correspond with three grooves of the plate below, and one-sixth of an inch wide. The spaces between adjacent holes are those proper to be left between letters. The writer is furnished with a blunt awl or stilet, and commences on the righthand side of the page. Feeling for the first hole, he forms within it the first letter by indenting on the paper the necessary dots. The grooves and the sides and angles of the hole are sufficient to guide his awl exactly, so that the dots are placed with perfect accuracy; and the grooves, although deep enough to allow the paper to be carried before the awl, are yet too shallow to allow it to be entirely broken through. When the first line is filled, the writer goes on to the next; and, when this is filled also, he moves the perforated slip of metal a step lower down, being guided by holes in the wooden frame, within which projections under the ends of the slip are received. When the sheet is completed, it is turned over towards the left, and the stamped figures appear in the usual way from left to right.

To make stereotype plates, a sheet of thin copper, supported by lead, is used in lieu of paper, and the awl is struck by a hammer. The indented side of the sheet is then backed up with solder, and a firm plate is produced, from which a considerable number of copies on paper may be taken by pressure.

It is difficult to exaggerate the impulse that would be given to embossed printing by the general acceptance of such a system as this. The preparation of copper plates would become a common resource for the blind, an amusement for those among them possessed of leisure, and a new source of profitable industry for those dependent upon labour for subsistence. Year by year stereotype plates would be multiplied, and a single copy of any book once stereotyped could always be obtained at the cost of paper and pressing.



["I AM HERE—NOW DO IT!"]

THE VEILED LADY.

BY THE

Author of "Fairleigh," "The Rival Sisters," &c., &c.

CHAPTER IV.

THREE weeks had passed since the events recorded in the last chapter occurred.

Upon the rude couch, his face thinner and very pale, lay the youth, the traces of keen suffering still fresh upon his countenance.

At his side sat Ella, her features plainly expressing the deep sympathy which dwelt in her heart, and her mild blue eyes bent kindly upon him. Presently she queried:

"Do you feel better, Frank?"

"Yes, dear, better in body; but years, or care, or sorrow can never wash away the sting which embitters my mind! He swore he would break my spirit, but he didn't; he could not—no, no!"

"Oh, how I cried that night, how my heart ached for you; it was so cruel!"

"Never mind, Ella, revenge will sometime be mine—sweet, dear revenge! Oh, how I long for it! and when it comes I will enjoy it; it shall be my life!"

"Revenge is wicked, Frank," she timidly suggested.

"Ella!" and his eyes dilated and sparkled, "it cannot be wrong in a case like this. A brute who has no feeling can never be conquered by love. Could I cause him to repent, I at least would try, but it would be fruitless. He must be met upon his own ground, and there will I meet him; and for each cut my flesh received, for each insult which has seared my mind, shall he suffer thrice!"

The maiden gazed upon the young, determined face, with a glance akin to reverence. It shone with heroism; it bespoke truth, innocence, strong will, resolution, and courage. Drawing nearer to him, she said:

"Frank, he will soon be here: promise me that you will not anger him."

"I will try, Ella," he calmly returned, though a flush overspread his face at the recollection of his wrong. "I will try to be silent."

"That is right. Listen—he comes!"

A heavy step now resounded in the room below; and presently a head appeared above the ladder, but it was not that of Moran.

The youth glanced inquiringly towards his gentle companion.

The maiden smiled reassuringly, and advanced towards the new comer, extending her hand.

He grasped it, and a kindly smile played over the bronzed cheeks as he said:

"I only came in for a moment to look at the youngster, and tell him something!"

"What is it?" asked the youth, raising himself upon his elbow, and regarding the stranger earnestly. "I supposed you'd like to know it," responded the sailor, "and I knew the captain wouldn't tell you. It is this: your old friend Mark was buried two weeks ago."

A wave of sorrow swept over the child's features, and he lowly and briefly inquired:

"Where?"

"Near the black rock, the other side of the bay."

"In that place, where the waves moan so dismally—the gloomiest spot in this gloomiest of islands?" exclaimed the youth in accents of mingled regret and anger. "He only did it to torment me, the wretch!"

"It is too bad," mused the stranger, reflectively.

"And the chest?" continued the youth, "what did he do with it?"

The sailor shook his head, and hesitated.

"Why do you not speak?" he eagerly persisted.

"What did he do with it?"

"He burnt it upon the black rock in the face of his crew."

The delicate fists closed, sparks of fire shot from his eyes, and he ejaculated:

"Oh, the monster! He is not satisfied with torturing the living, but he must satiate his rapacious spirit in desecrating the body of the dead; but there is a time coming when his power will be at an end, and I shall rule. Then let him beware, for my vengeance shall be swift, sure, and deadly!"

"Don't oppose him, boy," admonished the sailor; "he hates you now; he'll murder you if you run foul of him again."

The youth made no rejoinder, but it was evident that he gave no heed or consideration to the other's words.

"Mr. Kelly," observed Ella, "you look troubled; what else have you to tell us?"

"Something I don't like to speak, child," answered the person addressed; "but there is no use in beating about. I might as well leave ahead and tell you that the cap'n is going on a cruise in four days, and you and the boy'll have to go, too."

The girl's eyes drooped, her little hands involuntarily came together, a long sigh escaped her lips, and she murmured:

"It is bad enough here, but with that man, upon

the water, it is dreadful; and poor Frank will not be able to go."

"He'll have to go, at any rate," replied the sailor; "for you know when the cap'n says a thing he means it. You must nurse the lad and make him strong; for, worse luck, he'll have need of strength before long."

The last words were spoken in a low tone, inaudible to his listeners.

"I thank you very much for coming to tell us," said Ella, "for he would only have given us a half-hour's notice."

"I wanted to save you a scolding," returned the sailor, "and that's the reason I came. But I must go now, for the cap'n would rave if he knew that I had been here."

And nodding to the children, the man withdrew.

"Oh! Frank, this is awful!" cried the maiden, directing her large eyes upon him with a glance of pity. "I am so sorry for you, because you are so weak."

"Don't be sad, Ella, for this news gives me gladness."

"What?" she wonderingly interrupted.

"Yes, for I see a small chance of freeing myself from the tyranny of Moran! Oh! I shall be strong now; hope will make me so."

"I wish you could get away; but I should be so lone—lone—lonesome!"

And her voice quivered, her shapely head, with its crown of golden hair, fell upon her small white hands, and the tears rolled down her fair face.

"Dear Ella, do not weep," said the youth, with deep feeling. "I will take you with me, if it is possible."

"Oh! you are so kind, you make me cry every time you speak, for you are the only one who ever loved me! Oh! Frank, Frank, I feel wretched when I think of your leaving me, for you are so good, so very good; and, oh! it is so pleasant to be loved. Oh, dear, dear!" and her sobs choked her utterance.

The pathetic tone, pregnant with childlike sincerity, sent a thrill to the warm heart of the youth, and forced the tears to his dark eyes, and, gently placing his arms around her neck, he pressed a soft kiss upon her brow.

The act only called forth fresh tears, and there, in that miserable room, upon that barren island, away from the world, separated from every friendly being, the two forlorn children gave vent to their sorrow, their tears, their sobs together, and no human eye rested upon them.

Four days had passed. During that time Frank had nearly recovered his strength. As yet, Moran

had given no intimation of his intended cruise; but Ella, who was acquainted with his peculiarities and, fortunately, knew of his purpose, had packed what articles they required, and thus saved herself the abuse which Moran would delight in administering.

In a short time the tyrant entered. Daring a glance of mingled hate and scorn at the youth, he sneeringly said:

"Got well, have you? Got your cursed will broken, too, hain't you? Ha—ha—a—a!"

The blood in red waves rushed into the youth's face, and his eyes sparkled dangerously; but noticing Ella's eyes fixed pleadingly upon him, he, by a great effort, repressed his anger, and responded, as composedly as possible:

"I shall be well soon."

"Yes, salt water will do you good! Here, gish, pack your things and the boy's, we're off within an hour. Ha, h—a—a!"

And in dismal echoes that howl-laugh, so peculiar to him, rang through the room.

A well-assumed look of surprise rested upon the maiden's face, and she raised her eyes inquiringly.

"Don't you hear?" he yelled. "Go quick, and do as I tell you!"

She had created the desired impression, and, without waiting to incur more hard words, she entered her room, remained there a few minutes, then ascended to the loft, and, after waiting a suitable time, returned and announced everything in moderation.

"You've learned to move, have you? Well, now put on your duds, and start for the bay—quick! and you, boy, wait."

Donning an old cloak and hood, for it was yet early spring, and the air was cold, she cast a regretful look towards Frank, and left the hut.

As the door closed Moran turned to Frank, and harshly ordered:

"Get your bundle and go along, but don't speak to that girl. You're going on shipboard, and, if you don't mind, I'll give you to the fishes. Do you hear?"

Those glowing eyes were directed upon him, and from the youth's compressed lips breathed the words, low, firm, contemptuous, and ominous:

"I hear!"

"And you'll mind, too, you toad! Now go!"

Wrath was effervescing in the youth's breast and trembling upon his lips, but by a strong exercise of his volition he suppressed it, and, grasping his bundle, moved from the hut.

Slowly he walked along the circuitous path until he stood upon the brow of the elevation overlooking the bay, from which point the schooner was visible, riding at anchor. But that he cared not for; and a desire arising to visit the burial place of his former guardian, he descended the hill, and continued onward until he reached a small inlet, lined on each side by ponderous rocks, the largest of which rose up, grim, pointed, and dismal. At the inland side of this rock he noticed that the earth appeared loose, and knew it was the spot where his only friend was buried.

As he gazed upon it a feeling of utter desolation overcame him, and, dropping his package, he fell upon his knees at the side of the grave, and, raising his eyes, murmured, in painful accents:

"Oh, if you only knew how lonely I am, and how he in whom you reposed such trust has abused me, how you would feel! I can sit here and feel that your body is near me, but cannot see your face, nor hear your voice. Oh, if you were alive—"

"But he isn't, you whining hound!" sounded that rasping voice.

And with his coarse features contorted in ferocious triumph, John Moran gazed upon the kneeling lad.

The latter started back with gleaming eye, and angrily exclaimed:

"How dare you profane this earth with your footsteps? You are too base to look upon the ground which covers his ashes!"

Moran trembled, but controlling himself, he pointed to the bundle, and muttered:

"Take that, and move on!"

Slowly the youth arose, and, grasping the bundle, walked away from the spot, though his mind was intent on one idea—revenge. He was quiet—ah, too quiet! it was the portentous stillness which precedes the eruption of the volcano.

They soon reached the bay, upon whose shores Ella was waiting. As they were perceived by those upon the schooner, a boat was lowered and pulled towards the shore.

Motioning them both to seats in the bow, Moran seated himself in the stern, and ordered the men to give way.

In a few moments they arrived at the schooner, and were assisted up the ladder by Mr. Kelly, the chief mate.

After the boat was restored to its place at the port davits, Moran called his men together, and briefly addressed them, with:

"You see that boy—he will be one of the crew, and the man who shows him a favour will be ironed as a mutineer, and very likely got tossed overboard with a ball and chain round his neck. Now, remember!"

As Moran turned away, the men exchanged sly glances, and it was evident that, instead of prejudicing them against the youth, his words had raised in their breasts feelings of condolence and sympathy.

"You, girl, go to the cabin," commanded Moran.

And as she obeyed, he turned to the sailors, and added:

"All hands weigh anchor!"

The men sprang to the windlass, and, mingling with the dull croaking of the ropes, came the sound of their deep voices in the merry "Heave—ho," which rose upon the thick air, and blended pleasantly with the rushing of the waves.

"The anchor is secured to the bows, sir," reported the chief mate.

"Up with the jib and foresail! Lively, lads!" continued Moran.

And a smile played around his lips, for now he was in his element.

Like a white bird the foresail climbed the mast, and expanded with the breeze, and the schooner moved slowly through the water.

"Keep her off a little! Easy now!" pursued Moran, turning to the man at the helm, and then as his words were heeded, he gaily shouted:

"Up with the main and top-sails!"

Quickly the men hastened to their posts, and presently every stitch of canvas was given to the breeze, and an increased rate of speed the vessel breasted the waves.

So interested had Moran become in the working of the schooner, that he had quite forgotten the youth, but now that his vessel no longer needed his attention, his thoughts returned to him, and he accosted the first officer with:

"Did that youngster do his duty?"

The mate hesitated.

"Do you hear me, sir?" growled the angry captain.

"I will tell you," responded the youth with dauntless air. "I did nothing, nor do I intend to!"

"You don't? curse you! then take that!"

And with these words, uttered in a hissing voice, he grasped a marlinspike and hurled it at the youth's head.

The lad saw the movement, and as the missile flew from Moran's hand, he threw himself upon the deck, and the iron flew harmlessly over his head, and fell with a splash into the waters beyond.

The captain sprang forward, when, casting his eye over the port-quarter, he saw that the vessel was nearing a sand-reef, and quickly pausing, he fiercely shouted:

"You fool! port your helm—hard down, I say, hard!"

So rapidly was the order executed, the vessel being directly in the eye of the wind, that she careened, and the water rushed over the starboard gunwale, and the cordage groaned, while the sails flapped and rattled.

"Every man to his post! Stand by to ease her off! Steady your helm—steady!"

And once more the vessel righted and flew through the water, while the captain, relieved from the exigency of the moment, again looked about for Frank. He was nowhere to be seen. Moran's brow contracted, and he excitedly queried:

"Mr. Kelly, where is that boy?"

"He was standing athwart the fore balyards a moment ago," rejoined the mate. "I have not seen him since."

Was he lost? Had he been swept from the deck when the water rushed over it? These questions caused apprehension to cloud the features of the tyrant captain, and he hastily said:

"Send the girl Ella to me. Let the vessel be searched."

In a moment Ella appeared at the head of the companion-way. As Moran saw her, he harshly demanded:

"Where have you hidden that boy? Speak!"

"Frank, you mean? Why, I have not seen him since I left the deck. He isn't lost, is he?"

And the tears started to her eyes.

The captain gazed searchingly upon her, and his hazel eyes dilated until she recoiled in affright. After satisfying himself by a severe scrutiny that she spoke the truth, he sent her back into the cabin, and paced the deck with his head sunk upon his breast.

The day passed away, night came, the stars gleamed down upon the rolling waters, the wind moaned through the rigging, the schooner pursued her way over the trackless waste, and a silence almost oppressive hung over all. Clearly defined against the glimmering waters stood the man at the

helm, while the regular step of the forward watch was the only sound that broke the stillness.

The captain was angry, puzzled, and perplexed, and fearful lest the boy had fallen into the sea—not that he had any particular affection for him, but still it gave him pleasure to torment him; and for that, if nothing more, he desired his presence.

And poor Ella, much frightened at first, had, as the hours flew on and no tidings came of her beloved companion, grown inconsolable, and, with her head buried in her pillows, had wept and wept until nature overpowered her grief, and she sank into a troubled sleep.

Morning came, the sun rose in gorgeous splendour, bathing the horizon in a flood of gold, and transforming the rolling waves to undulating pyramids of scintillating, sparkling diamonds, which at intervals arose in brilliant showers, and fell gently back into their native element with a peal of silvery music.

At an early hour Moran came on deck. It was evident that he had passed a night of anxiety, for his face was pale, and the nervous twitching of the muscles around his mouth, and the restless movement of his stony eyes, gave indication that he was unusually irritable.

To the respectful "Good morning, sir" of the mate, he snappishly asked:

"Have you seen or heard of that young rascal?"

"I have not," he answered, regretfully.

"Confusion!" muttered Moran, striking his fists together. "Where can he be? He must be concealed somewhere!"

"The schooner has been searched, sir," said the mate.

Moran made no reply, but dashed down the companion-way, entered the cabin, and, to dissipate his vexation, gave his attention to his charts.

With an aching head and heavy heart, Ella awoke, only to more fully realise her loss, and drag through another day of sorrow and weeping.

All day long Moran fretted, fumed, raved, and swore, but it availed him nought, and he was obliged to submit as best he could.

The twilight shadows gathered on the ocean, the sun sank with a ruddy glare into his watery bed, the evening came, the moon arose, and still the fate of the youth remained a mystery.

Another day dawned. The captain had become desperate, and vented his spite and rancour upon the men, until many a darkened brow warned him that forbearance had nearly ceased to be a virtue.

'Twas the hour of noon. Moran stood near the starboard gunwale, his heavy brows drawn down until they almost obscured the eyes beneath. At length he vindictively ejaculated:

"Hang that boy for the trouble he has given me! If he were here I would flog him!"

"I am here—now do it!" sounded that clear, musical voice; and the youth stepped over the port gunwale.

The sailors started back in affright, for the sight of that pale face, with the dark curls clustering around it, added to the strange and sudden way in which he had appeared in their midst, aroused their superstition, and it was palpable that they considered this an apparition.

For a moment amazement rendered the captain mute. Then, while a light of satisfaction broke over his face, he hurriedly asked:

"Where in the name of the fiends did you come from?"

Ere he could speak, a cry of joy resounded through the air, and Ella rushed upon deck, her golden hair streaming almost straight in the breeze, and her eyes shining with love and gladness. Forgetting the presence of Moran, she threw her arms about the youth's neck, and exclaimed:

"Oh, dear, dear Frank! I am so glad—so happy! I am—oh, I am!"

Many an eye that scenes of warfare had failed to dim, were dewy as they saw the heartfelt joy of that innocent maiden.

Moran's face was convulsed with rage, his teeth grated, and, springing forward, he clutched her by the arm, and tore her from the youth's embrace.

A half-suppressed moan of pain escaped her lips as his strong fingers closed tightly upon her delicate flesh.

Many an eye flashed, many a fist closed as the men beheld their commander's brutality, but none dared to give their feelings expression.

The captain noticed not their looks, but after sending Ella to the cabin, turned towards the youth, and, in tones of suppressed anger, asked:

"Now, where were you, youngster?"

"In the boat that hangs by the stern davits," he indifferently returned.

"How did you get anything to eat?"

"My bundle afforded that."

"How did you conceal yourself?"

"By drawing the canvas over my body."

Moran's wrath now burst forth, and while his features twitched and his eyes glared, he hissed: "You rascal, I'll flog you with a whip! I'll learn you to play such tricks! Go below!"

An instant the youth gazed upon him, while an expression of peculiar determination wreathed his features, and his brilliant eyes seemed emitting flames. Then, throwing one significant glance towards the crew, he descended to the cabin.

Presently Moran entered, his face livid with rage, and his teeth actually chattering. An instant he glared upon the youth, and then, drawing a whip from beneath his jacket, fiercely shouted:

"Now, I'll show you how to keep my vessel in an uproar! Now, you cur, I'll lay you up for another month!"

The boy moved not, nor spoke, but his eyes dilated with a foreboding gleam, and his face became white and rigid.

"Oh, father! I beg of you, harm him not—please don't. Oh, hear me—hear me!" exclaimed Ella, prostrating herself at his feet, and gazing imploringly into his face.

"Away, girl, away! I swear he shall pay for this!"

And with these words, uttered in a thick, harsh voice, he advanced, and swung the lash high up in the air.

The youth threw one foot forward; a smile of scorn, anger, and contempt nestled around his lips. Then his arm flew up, and from it, hurled with all his strength, an iron bolt darted hissing through the air.

Moran's arm dropped to his side, as if from a stroke of paralysis, a shriek escaped his lips, the blood gushed from a wound in his head, and he fell heavily to the floor.

"I said I would kill him," cried the mad boy, "and I have!"

And with flushed face and burning eye, he rushed from the cabin and dashed up the companion-way to the deck.

At the head of the stairs he was met by Mr. Kelly, who started back as he saw the wildness of his face, and exclaimed:

"What has happened? Why in such haste?"

"A boat!" he shouted, pressing his hands to his throbbing brows. "I want a boat!"

The mate gazed upon him almost bewildered, and, turning to the second officer, he muttered:

"The boy is crazy—actually crazy!"

The youth darted forward, clutched the mate's arm, and while his eyes glistened fearfully, tremulously articulated:

"A boat! I will have it! Lower it away—quick!"

"But, my boy, we are in mid ocean!"

"Then I will get it! Away—touch me not!"

And, springing to the port davits, he proceeded to loosen the ropes.

"Reef your sails! Lay to!" ordered the mate.

The men obeyed and the vessel's motion ceased.

The mate held a hurried consultation with the second officer, and they decided to let the boy go. Accordingly, the boat was made ready, and the youth stepped over the gunwale.

At that moment Ella rushed upon deck, with pale face and dishevelled hair.

"Oh! Frank, Frank!" she frantically ejaculated, "what have you done? Where are you going? Oh! this is awful!"

The youth's eyes flashed with a light almost insane, and, waving one hand aloft, he responded, in tones clear and thrilling:

"I seek rest and peace upon the billow! I go where the waves and sunlight shall be my only companions—away, away, where nature's harmony dwells—away!"

And with these words he descended the ladder, entered the boat, and, grasping the oars, pulled away from the schooner.

"Oh! go after him!" shrieked Ella, stretching her hands supplicatingly towards him, while her face was pallid. "He'll starve—he'll be drowned! Save him—oh! oh!"

"What is this?" asked the mate, excitedly. "What has he done?"

The maiden hesitated.

"Why do you not speak?" he vehemently continued. "And why do you tremble?"

Ella drew a long, weary breath, and, in faltering tones, rejoined:

"He has killed the captain!"

Like fire those words ran through the vessel, and were caught up and repeated until each man gazed into the face of his companion; but none could find their voice, for all were dumbfounded, and then, shading their eyes, they gazed far out upon the ocean, and noting a speck, knew it was the youthful avenger.

As the mate's senses resumed their natural action, for the startling announcement had for the moment benumbed them, he ran down the companion-way

stairs, burst into the cabin, and the first sight that met his eyes was the blood-stained, deathlike face of John Moran.

(To be continued.)

EVELYN'S PLOT.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Mrs. FLEMING bowed her head.

"I will, I will! Only leave me now."

There was a pause. Still the visitor did not depart. She stooped down again to the humbled woman, and said, in a low voice:

"For the first time for many a long year, I can say that I forgive you. It is my first essay in the art that I have preached to you. I can, and I do forgive the woman who did me the bitterest evil of my life."

And ere Mrs. Fleming could be aware, she had lifted her veil for an instant, pressed her lips on her brow, and was gone.

The nurse looked like one bewildered. She passed her hand over her eyes.

"Merciful heavens!" she said, "merciful heavens! Can it be? And what does it portend?"

A cold shiver came over her. It was long before she could summon composure to return to her post beside the invalid, who had been suffering for the last few days from an attack of fever, brought on, as it appeared, by the irritation and trouble of his mind.

Ere we close the chapter, we must just follow the mysterious female to her distant home.

It had been some hours since she had left it on that dull winter morning. Her face betrayed a weary, sad look when she entered, that attracted the attention of her old serving-man, as the sole other tenant of that place was usually supposed to be.

"What have you been about?" he asked, with a look of rough kindness. "You're on the high road to kill yourself, ever since that old fellow managed to tumble down like a sky-rocket on the place. You're a fool for your pains, Helen; that's what I've got to say!"

"You've no right to say it—no right to comment on my actions," she said, impatiently. "So long as you are cared for, you need take no thought about me. I know that my days are numbered, and I am content that it should be so. And you shall have no reason to lament my death, if you are wise. Hark ye, I have much to say to you, Paul—much to say. But I am too weary now. Only, as you love gold so dearly—gold and notes, Paul, gold and notes—I will take care that they shall abound, if you will follow my directions, and serve me in this last crisis of my weary, sad life. Will you promise, Paul?—promise that if I can hold you harmless, and will give you a reward far above your wildest dreams, that you will obey me in this?"

He looked puzzled.

"I can't understand you, Helen. You've been many a year in peace, and willing to be at peace; and now you're like an unquiet ghost more than a woman."

"Peace?" she repeated, bitterly, "peace? Paul, I have not known peace for eighteen long years. But for the sake of the past, I would have remained in the dark apathy that you call peace, had not the crime of one and the sufferings of another roused me from the lethargy. But enough of that. I shall be able to tell you all that I desire, and wish, and hope. Hope!—no, that word is not for me. I mean all that it is now the sole object of my days to accomplish."

Paul looked at her as he might have done on a maniac. But there was neither fever nor lunacy in that cold, pale face, and those calm, weary eyes.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

OLIVER DANVERS had now been some weary weeks in his prison cell; and his heart, brave as it was, gradually grew sick and faint, and his cheek pale and wan.

Day by day as Frank Temple had made his visit, and as the reports he brought grew more unfavourable, Oliver's hopes had sunk. His hopes—not his courage; that remained in its full force. He did, it is true, shrink from the public disgrace, the exposure, the terrible penalty that waited conviction; but still his noble spirit, his lofty pride, sustained him through it all.

He would not give his enemies a triumph over him. At least his spirit was his own, and free. If his body was in fetters, his energy, and his hopes, and consciousness of innocence were still his own.

Only one thought unmanned him—the thought of Evelyn. The idea of her grief, her loneliness, and unprotected state distressed and oppressed his spirit. He had never yet seen her. Frank Temple had

deemed it better that they should not meet till the trial was over.

"Better not, my dear sir," he had said. "Let the idea of any collusion be entirely out of all question. Let it be impossible for any one to see that there has been any arrangement between you and the principal witness for the prosecution, which, so far as I can tell, your cousin will be. I have still a sanguine hope that she may be rather brought to bear witness in your favour. In any case, it will strengthen your case much for her to be able to say that she has never yet seen you since the day when you were arrested. So soon as the trial is over you will meet."

Oliver smiled sadly.

"Yes," he said, "we shall meet, either for joy or for a final parting. Let it be so, then. Let it be as you say. How does she bear it, poor Evelyn?"

"Like herself. As you would suppose, with the nobleness of a woman who will do her duty at any cost, in any case."

"Ah! She is a jewel which a monarch might envy," said the cousin, fervently. "Frank, I have sometimes fancied that you appreciated her value only too well. Nay, do not shrink from the confession. I know you and her well enough to trust you both. If I am proved innocent, I know full well that you would rejoice as fervently as anyone in our happiness—in the happiness that you have caused. If not, then it would be a comfort and a blessing for me to feel that she had one as good and noble as yourself to shelter and watch over her when I was in a distant land—a disgraced felon."

"Stay, Danvers, stay!" exclaimed Frank, grasping his hand firmly. "You are wrong—quite wrong; nay, you are, I may say, unjust to your cousin, if not to me! If—which Heaven forbid—your enemies were to prevail against you, it would be as impossible for Evelyn Rivers to love anyone but yourself, as for you to forget her in a distant land. And for me, I would honestly confess that I had a stronger attraction towards her than I ever before felt. But that is now merely a reverence, a holy reverence and admiration, which could no more turn to earthly love than my admiration of the Madonna. Now, rest assured that all should be done that a brother, a guardian—a father, if you will—could devise for her comfort, if such a contingency were to arise. But for any such love—such a relation as that to which you allude—never!"

Oliver returned the friendly pressure.

"Heaven bless you!" he said. "I fear I am terribly selfish to feel a gleam of pleasure at the idea of my Evelyn's constancy and love. But it is the weakness of human nature. And it is a merciful indulgence that thus permits the sweetening of this bitter trial by the thought of her devotion. Tell her, Frank, from me, that it has supported me in suspense, and that it will still more save me from despair in the long months and years of suffering that may await me. Bid her keep up her courage for my sake, and as the dearest proof of your love, guard for me my most precious treasure, her health and life!"

Frank promised, though his own voice had a strange hoarseness in its tone.

And then the friends parted, to meet but once more before the day of trial.

Oliver had composed himself for the remainder of his day of solitude, when the gaoler once more opened the door of his cell, and announced a gentleman to see him.

The young man looked up in surprise. He could scarcely form even a guess who the stranger could be, for he had not even had one single notice of the interest or countenance of one single friend in his adversity. And it was scarcely likely that it would begin now, when his prospects were even darker, and his disgrace more heavily weighing upon his head and name. And, when the visitor came forward into the room, there was little explanation thrown on the mystery.

The tall, still erect, and slight form of the stranger ill accorded with the white though still abundant hair that fell over a nobly-shaped head. The eyes were too bright and sparkling to accord with the tired and somewhat sunken cheeks.

And the whole appearance of the stranger was a singular contrast, in the part and the whole. One characteristic seemed to war with the other, so as to baffle conjecture as to his age or his antecedents.

Oliver gazed at him in some surprise. The stranger calmly seated himself opposite to him.

"Pardon me," he said, with a kindly smile. "You have at least the means of making a friend welcome in your temporary home. And you see I avail myself of it."

"A friend?" Philip asked, inquiringly. "I feel that no one but a friend would come to me in this place, unless, indeed," he added, "it were an enemy."

"Which latter, I assure you, I am not," ejaculated the stranger.

"Then," continued Oliver, "it appears that I

ought to know you. And yet, I do not, I confess, recall in any degree your features."

"And yet we have met before," said the stranger. "It is some years since, I own, but still it is certain that you have passed many a day, and even months, in my company, young man, in days long ago. But that is little to the purpose, unless to give you some confidence in me and my purposes. My errand here is to speak of yourself, not of me."

Oliver bowed.

"I am, like all in deep trouble, rather selfish," he said, "and, perhaps, more inclined to speak and to think of my own affairs than those of others. But yet, it is neither a pleasant, nor even an edifying subject. And, unless for some especial object, I would pray you to excuse my talking when my heart is burdened, and I would rather be alone with my own thoughts."

The stranger did not seem at all offended or rebuked by Oliver's words.

"I dare say," he said, "I dare say. It is but natural. Trouble makes cynics of us all. And yet if it had always that effect, I should have been a hermit long since. But my business can soon be spoken. May I venture to tell my meaning in plain words?"

Oliver bowed.

"And without offence?"

"Undoubtedly, if none is intended."

"That, at least, I can promise," said the stranger, a winning and kindly smile illuminating his wan features. "That, at least, I can promise. I have some knowledge, young man, of your affairs, more, perhaps, than anyone else, save yourself. And I am come to advise you, and to urge you for your own good."

Oliver moved impatiently.

"I cannot imagine such advice of any service," he said. "Unless you can tell me of any fresh proofs or discoveries in this wretched affair, I can safely say that your kindness, however well-meant, is fruitless. The case is strong against me, and I cannot disprove it."

"Except by throwing the guilt on another!"

The young man started.

"You see I know more than you imagine," said the stranger, significantly. "I know that you would at least stand a very good chance of escape, if you were to tell all that you know. Tell, for example, that your—"

Oliver waved his hand angrily.

"Peace!" he said, "peace! Whoever you are, and whatever your motive, it is in vain. I will not drag the name of those most sacred and dear into a dark, and it may be useless, shame."

"But if it will surely save yourself?" resumed the visitor. "Think for a moment ere you decide. I believe that I could absolutely promise you that if you were to consent to give but one hint as to the truth, proof would be forthcoming, and that your statement would be more than verified by others. It is an idle scruple after all? The dead cannot suffer, and the living can. Come, reflect once more ere you decide?"

"The dead can suffer," he replied, calmly. "The good name of the dead can suffer; and I know not that all whom it concerns are dead."

"And if they were living, would you suffer for them?"

"I would suffer rather than that they should be condemned unheard," he said, warmly. "Listen, sir. Since it has pleased you to take this interest in my affairs, and I will believe for Evelyn's sake that it is kindly and well-meant, I will explain once for all what I feel and mean. It may be that you are correct; I do not deny nor admit it. But in any case my conduct would be the same. If it were true that I could escape by casting the disgrace and the shame on the dead or the absent, when unable to disprove it or to defend themselves, could you, could any honourable man who knew or guessed the ties that bind me to those persons, desire me to be guilty of such baseness?"

"Yet you are young. You have life, and love, and happiness, and the feelings of others at stake."

Oliver's lip quivered.

"There would be little happiness for me with a burdened conscience," he said; "and the only one who would weep my loss would rather weep me in outward suffering and shame than in inward and real meanness and base cowardice. No, it is in vain. I have thought—thought till my very brain was giddy—of all that you can urge; and my resolution is unmovable."

"But perhaps you know not that it was certain; you know not but that you might incur this supposed disgrace for nothing. I pledge you my word that it would not be so; I pledge you my word that the vindication of yourself would be complete."

"It cannot be!" said the young man, firmly; "it cannot be. Nothing can make me save myself in

the manner you propose. If that is my only hope, I will suffer all—as I can. It is but for life—a short lifetime."

"You know not what it is—a lifetime at your age; the wretched shame, the society of felons, the reprobation of all honest and honourable men."

"I can bear all, when my conscience is clear."

The gentleman was silent for a few minutes. His features worked as if from some strong emotion. His lips parted more than once as if to speak something, which he at last refrained from saying; and then he rose to go.

"Since you are obstinate," he said, "I can do no more. I came to save you; at least, to give you a chance of safety. But as it is, there can be no further need of argument, and I will leave you to yourself."

Oliver looked earnestly at him.

"I cannot afford to throw away the kindly feeling of anyone," he said, holding out his hand. "I think you meant kindly and well, though you are mistaken in your advice. But I thank you for your intentions, and I would ask, if you do indeed believe me innocent, that you will not hear me condemned without a word of defence. Let them see that there may be a chance for a condemned man being yet an innocent one. May I ask this at your hands?"

The visitor gave a strangely amused look.

"Oh, the inconsistency of human nature!" he said. "You value the good opinion of your fellow men, while yet professing to despise it. However, be content. I will not let the opportunity of defending you pass by; though vindicate you I cannot. Farewell! I am satisfied that I have discharged my errand."

He left the prison apartment as he spoke, and Oliver was once more alone—alone with his sadness, his prospects, his sense of utter desolation. Not one ray of hope left.

Even the thought of Evelyn—her whose very name was dearer to him than the sweetest music—even the thought of her was agony.

To think of her in the lonely misery which was to be her portion; to feel that he had, by winning her young heart, made the misery of her life—was indeed the keenest pang of all.

He would have died to spare her pain. And yet he had blighted her whole happiness, her very name, by his present disgrace.

But then in the midst of all this there was yet one drop of sweetness to redeem the bitter gall of his cup.

"Evelyn, my own dearest Evelyn! It is for you at least, it is partly for your own dear sake, that I am willing to endure all this. At least your name will not be branded with disgrace. Though you may be spoken of as a felon's cousin, the name will not be nearer—more dear. My precious, precious, cousin, God bless you! and give you consolation and happiness! and then I can bear all that may come to me, without a murmur!"

And he turned, and throwing himself on his knees, he wept long, while yet he ejaculated from time to time earnest entreaties for himself and her he loved better than himself.

When he arose, his face was calm; and his sleep was more tranquil than it had been for many a long night.

The victory had been fought and won.

Meanwhile, his visitor had taken his way from the gloomy prison in the direction of Frank Temple's chambers.

The young barrister was at home, and the stranger was at once admitted to an interview. It was a long and apparently anxious one, for the voices and faces of both were grave and earnest as they spoke. Yet it seemed to lead to no satisfactory results. For, when the visitors at length opened the door to depart, Frank's words were brief and abrupt:

"I can consent to no such arrangement. My duty to my client is plain. If you have proof to give, and will allow me to put you in the witness-box, I will consider as to its desirability for Mr. Danvers' interests. But the information you propose is too vague and your plan too wild for me to risk it."

"Then you decline my interference?"

"In the way you propose, yes."

"Then all I can say is, that both you and your client are obstinate, wrong-headed—"

The remainder of the sentence was lost in the noise of a pair of remarkably creaky boots, as he descended the stairs.

But when he emerged in the gaslights, the expression of his face was by no means as indignant as might have been supposed.

On the contrary, there was a quiet, almost gratified look in his features that spoke rather of satisfaction than disappointment.

"There is but one other resource," he said; "but one other resource. And that only she can supply. God grant that it may not be too late ere it is found!"

Meanwhile Frank Temple had re-entered his chambers in a half-perplexed, half-amused mood, as if he was uncertain whether to laugh or to be indignant at the proposal that had been made to him. At last he muttered:

"Madman, fool, or rogue! that's certain. And I would not have listened so long, but for poor Danvers' sake. A complete hallucination, either natural or insane. It bodes little good for my client when such fools meddle with his affairs. I have little to work upon at present, that's too certain."

As he returned to his table, he noticed two notes, both of them in female handwriting, lying half concealed by the other papers, and which he had not before noticed in the brief interval between his return and the visit of the stranger.

He, naturally enough, perhaps, gave the preference to the graceful billet whose origin he somewhat suspected, and read the following:

"DEAR MR. TEMPLE.—It is very bold, I fear, of me to write to you, but I am so very much concerned about this miserable affair, and my aunt is not only ill but too rigid and correct in her ideas to interfere with what she calls 'justice'; and I feel nearly sure, from what you told me and what I can learn from those deceitful papers, which I never read before, except the *Court Circular* and *Opera Notices*, that there is little chance of poor Mr. Danvers proving his innocence, though I feel as certain as you do that he is innocent. And what I want to say is simply this. I am told that all the money is taken away, except what is wanted for his defence; and, if it is necessary, and you can persuade him to take it, I wish you would manage for him to escape by some means or other. And I have quite enough at my own disposal to furnish ample means, if gold will do any good. I daresay you will think me very unprincipled, but it is only because I am so sure that he is innocent, and you would be so grieved if you could not save him. Pray do not be too much shocked. I am quite in earnest, and shall be ready to act directly I have your reply. Yours most sincerely,

"MARIE WENTWORTH."

Frank half laughed as he read the letter. And yet a gratified flush came up in his face.

"I shall be so grieved!" he repeated. "Dear little creature. I never saw greater simplicity and yet true-hearted generosity of nature in a girl so brought up."

The other note was neither addressed, save by the day of the month, nor bore any signature, save initials. It was written in a bold feminine hand, and it ran thus:

"MR. FRANK TEMPLE is giving himself very unnecessary anxiety and trouble by the nature of the defence he is preparing for his client. Let him organise and arrange what he will, all will be of no avail, unless the now secret and unlooked-for friends who are working on his behalf are successful in their proceedings. Meanwhile, as it is not safe or possible to enter on the character of the defence thus preparing for him, the only advice or request that I can give under the circumstances is, to keep quiet from any lame defence, that might damage rather than benefit. There is hope, but not certainty, unless one missing link can be supplied."

"A FRIEND TO THE ACCUSED."

Frank threw the letter down in disgust.

"A poor device, a wretched subterfuge to throw us off our guard," he said, bitterly; "but in vain. I am not quite so easily gulled."

CHAPTER XLIX.

It was but two days before the trial of Oliver Danvers.

Again Basil Mordaunt sat in the same spot where he had been musing in the evening of the mysterious female's visit. His eyes were fixed on the dim gas-lamps, the scanty passengers, the drizzling rain, the scarcely visible lights in the opposite houses.

His eyes, as we have said, were fixed on them, but his thoughts were far away. The very magnitude of the stake, and the near approach of the crisis, was perhaps, somewhat weighing on his heart.

"It was this very day," he murmured, "this very day, sixteen long years since. It is strange that chance should thus bring it round to this special time. It seems as if December was the month destined for the completion or disappointment of my plans. Let me see. Twenty years ago this month I proposed to Gertrude Danvers, and was accepted by her, and scorned by her father."

"Eighteen years ago this very month, Helen discarded me in idle dudgeon, only to return into my power more effectually than ever; when I promised her that she should be my wife so soon as all my plans were fully complete."

"And then—and then—one year after that, the foolish bird flew of its own will into the net. Gertrude cast herself headlong into my arms. Of course I opened them to receive her; but I took good care

she should not carry me along with her in her fall. Foolish woman! Idiot! At last she justified my opinion of her. I never loved her. Love! Did I ever feel it? Now, when my hair is grizzling with time, and I can look back and laugh at the idle passions of youth, I can ask myself that question. Did I ever love? Yes, I did love that splendid girl; and I believe that she loved me! A curious fate, and flattering enough in my younger days—to be loved by two such women. One a beautiful heiress, the other a magnificent woman! But it is past now; it is nothing, and worse than nothing, save as it is connected with the present.

"December again! December the fourteenth! The very day when Gertrude fled to—"

"Yes," said a voice behind him; a calm, still voice, that made him start, as if from the realms of another world, to that which now immediately surrounded him. "Yes, Basil Maynard, this very day, almost this very hour."

He turned. A hand was laid on his shoulder, a cold, icy hand that gave a thrill through even the warm dressing-coat that he wore.

A tall figure, wrapped in concealing and sombre garments, stood by him. It was not unlike the appearance of a few brief days before, but still he knew, from the voice and the very form, that it was not the same.

Had it not been for that touch—that name which still thrilled his blood, he might have fancied that it was merely a phantom of his own creating.

"Basil!"

She threw down her veil.

Mrs. Fleming stood visibly before him.

"How came you here?" he said, after the first moment of extreme and paralyzing suspense. "How dare you come here? I thought you dead long since!"

"The wish brought the belief. Basil Maynard," she said, bitterly, "did you think that no one had more humanity than yourself—did you think because you left me in destitution and suffering in that distant convent, that I should be utterly deserted? Did you think that either my case was beyond their poor but kindly skill, or that they would thrust me forth when they found that you did not return? Was that your belief?"

He was silent.

"Scarcely, Gertrude. You do me injustice. They told me, when I returned some months after to the spot, that you were dead."

"I was dead to the world—dead to you—dead to all that I had ever loved in other days! And they had promised me that I should be represented as such on condition that I took that vow."

"What vow?" he asked, scornfully.

"I will tell you," she said, placing herself on a chair that immediately faced him, though not in reach of his hand, which had been extended to divest her of her wrapping cloak, as if to satisfy himself more fully of her identity. "I will tell you, for the time is come when it is fit that I should give you, at once, the warning and the lesson that my story should convey. I have vowed a solemn and awful vow, which I have kept through every temptation, every strong, heart-thrilling, heart-breaking temptation. But the hour is come when it is lawful to speak what has been for so many years hidden in my own breast."

She paused for some minutes.

Basil did not attempt to break the silence.

"I am ready, Gertrude," he at length said, seeing that she still paused. "Perhaps when I have heard your tale I may be able to give you some explanation of what has so disturbed your mind. There are necessities in life that unhappily outweigh all considerations, and, it may be, that you will find it has been so in our case. Speak freely, and I will answer truly."

A withering look of triumph came over her face.

"The same," she said, "ever the same. Your own words convicted you but now. And it is well. I might have been fool, idiot, enough, in my woman's weakness, to believe you, had I no certain proof to the contrary. Now I am armed. And it is fortunate for you that my coming here to-night did not hang on any remnant of old love for your wretched self, but on the stern sense of duty, and of anxiety for others, that nothing which you can say or do would alter. I know now that you never loved me—that you loved another even while leading me to my destruction. Thank God, the sad illusion is gone! I can act now from one principle alone—from the remorse for the past, and the desire to atone for the crime that has brought ruin on so many."

She paused for a moment, as if to gather strength and resolution for her task. The tears rushed into her eyes as she looked on Basil.

"Fool—fool that I am!" she said. "I thought all this was past—quite dead within me."

He put his hand on hers. She snatched it from him with a shiver.

"Gertrude, you love me still?" he murmured. She shook her head.

"No, no!—no more than I love a serpent or tiger. I may cling to a memory—to the image that I had figured to myself, but love for you?—never! I mourn over past illusions; that brings those tears."

She hastily brushed them aside; and then the white face resumed its usual impassive calmness.

"Listen," she said, "listen while I give one brief sketch of the past, and then pause ere you answer me for the future. As you said but now, it is twenty long years since I, as Gertrude Danvers, listened to your vows, and loved and cherished your image in my heart with girlish idolatry—an idolatry that, like most other such earthly profanations, was my bitter punishment and ruin. My father knew you better than I, in my inexperienced folly, could guess you to be. It was not that the man he chose for me from my admirers was rich; it was not that your income was precarious, while his was more apparently secured by what afterwards proved but a fallacious security; it was not that which made him so determined, Basil Maynard, that you should never have his daughter's hand. It was the knowledge that your character could never make his daughter happy. And then time went on. You appeared to acquiesce. You came to my husband's house, and played the part of my husband's friend. Even I was deceived. I thought you were anxious to be near the woman you loved, if only as a friend, and I was thrown off my guard. I knew not all—even I knew not all, that transpired with him in three eventful years. But I believe and suspect that my generous husband lent or gave large sums to the man who was plotting to betray him. And all this time my false heart was ever betraying me. The kindness, the worth of my husband, the birth of my children, had no power to win the love which had once been given to you; and your presence constantly fostered that love. Your words, looks, and actions—involuntarily, as it seemed—betrayed that you still retained unconquered the affection you had felt for me, accomplished hypocrite that you are!"

Again she paused for a moment. Then she continued:

"Need I tell the wretched arts that you practised—the insinuations, the temptations? I scarcely now can comprehend your object. Was it the jewels that were at my command, or was it revenge?"

He did not reply, and she went on.

"And that over—that fall once accomplished—what followed?"

"The usual results. Coldness and scorn to me, and misery for the noble husband I had felt so cruelly and the brother who had so loved me and sheltered my girlhood, were the consequences of my disgrace and shame. It is ever so, I believe; but in your case more bitter, more rapid, and more crushing than is usually the lot of such unhallowed affection."

"Then came the last crowning injury—desertion! Yes, actual desertion of the miserable woman you had tempted from her home and her happiness. When, from sorrow and fatigue and remorse, from your harshness and reproaches, your neglect, and actual privation, I fell ill at that hospitable though humble convent in the rocky Apennines, you left me, with a shallow pretext of seeking help, never to return. Days—weeks passed. The good nurse could scarcely believe such sin possible. And for many a long day, as they restored me back to health, or rather to safety from death, they constantly attempted to cheer me with hopes of your return, with the imagined possibilities that might have kept you from my side. At last even their charity and my faint hopes vanished. And I told them all—all save the name. For my husband's sake—not for yours, not for mine—I would not publish the name. But they listened with the mingled shame and horror and Christian charity of holy women. They looked on my cheek, from which the blood had flowed for ever. They heard my true and agonised penitence; and they believed that I might be received and pardoned, if my repentance and my future life were like the Magdalen of old. They gave me counsel—they gave me holy admonitions, and they led me to consider my future life rather as a scene of rightful penance for the past, than as a mere selfish misery and period of murmuring complaint."

"And first, they enjoined on me, and promised for themselves, that you should rather believe me dead than ever have a chance of tempting me once again to listen to your deceitful promises. It was on that account that they told you that I was dead when you—I know not how long after—visited their holy home. My plan was soon laid out. I would devote myself to the sick and the dying; and for years my life was spent in the hospitals and cities of the Continent, in one weary, wretched round of sickness, and pain, and death."

"And another penance I proposed to myself. I vowed that I would not acknowledge myself to my

husband or my children till the day might come when the atonement should be complete; that my lips should never touch theirs, and that I would never claim or hear the name of mother till my hour came. I have kept that vow, Basil."

Basil Maynard was silent. Even his hard, nerveless nature could scarcely resist the calm, deep pathos of the unvarnished, simply-told narrative. He saw there no tears, no prayers, no reproaches. She told the truth, and from her very heart she thus loaded him with unconscious contempt, and shame, and scorn, far more than by the most frantic feminine revilings.

"All this I have done, Basil; and kept silence—silence towards you—silence about you. Even your cruel desertion was not proclaimed by me. I was content to let the world forget the whole scandal, and, as they believed me dead, to think of you, or credit any story of your fate you chose to publish. But then, while I was in my father's house, came a change in all things. I guessed the dark spirit that was working all the evil, which was then only beginning to appear. I did not know that you were even living, but 'the tree is known by its fruits,' and I felt certain who it was that sowed the seeds of that fearful misery which is now coming to a crisis. It could be but one person—the author of my ruin and my wretchedness."

"You did me honour," said Basil, with a touch of his old sardonic humour. "You recognised the hand of a master in the work."

"A master in evil—yes. But enough of that; I am not come to taunt nor revile, but only to bring you, if possible, to some sense, not only of justice, but of safety."

"Safety?"

"Yes. Do you suppose that you are invulnerable? Do you suppose that you will be permitted ever to reap the fruits and to let others take the bitterness? I tell you retribution is at hand, if you will not consider and repent in time."

"From whom? yourself, I suppose," he said, with sarcastic contempt.

"No; that is, I shall, after this warning, throw my poor efforts into the scale. But the hand that will strike the blow, or rather that will ward it from others, is very different to those whom you have injured even more terribly than myself, because they were innocent, and working to defeat your plot. I have come this night to warn you, Basil—to warn you solemnly of the evil that I know awaits you."

"You love me still, then? I was certain of it!"

"I? God forbid such crime and misery should again stain my heart or lips!" she said. "No, Basil Maynard, all love for you has long since dried in my heart, and if there was the least spark lingering of the old flame, the words I heard you speak this night would have effectually stamped it with blackness! No; it is at once pity and duty to a man whom I, perhaps, once helped in his downward course that has brought me here. And, it may be, some desire that the scandal should not be too public, and the tale be too widely spread, as must otherwise be the case."

He looked calmly on her. He had, perhaps, quailed and hesitated a little at first, but he soon regained his strength and composure of mind.

"Gertrude, you might know me better than to believe that I could be terrified by childish, vague terrors and warnings like these. If you allude to the approaching trial of Oliver Danvers, I know full well that nothing can avert his fate; I have him entirely in my power. The crime has been brought home to him, and no one—no one can save him from condemnation. Be thankful that your son has escaped as yet, owing to chance—a perversity that I could not foresee. Let that suffice you. For the rest, my mind is unchangeable. Do you think that the plans and purposes of years are to be changed and relinquished at a woman's vague words of warning?"

"No; but I know you well enough, Basil Maynard, to feel some belief in your selfish fears. You would scarcely like to fall into the pit you had dugged for others."

The tone was low and concentrated, and her eyes had a grave and earnest warning in them that could scarcely be affected.

(To be continued.)

SINGULAR CAVE DISCOVERIES IN AMERICA.—A natural wonder was lately discovered on the Maquoketa, Iowa, about eight miles north-west of the city. It consists of a succession or continuation of caves. These caves were discovered some months ago 100 feet below the surface of the earth, by men who are now busily engaged prospecting them for mineral. The large cave is over 1,200 feet in length, and the smaller one 1,600 feet, the two being separated from each other by an east and west bar, about 60 feet in thickness. No lead ore

has yet been discovered in the large cave, it being filled with large bodies of iron-rust rock, which have fallen down from the roof and sides in great masses. In the smaller, however, the mineral shows itself quite freely, and large quantities have been taken out, while the prospect for richer leads than any yet found grows daily more flattering. Mineral also abounds in considerable quantities through the bar mentioned, and the indications are that it will soon be developed here in paying quantities. That these caves thus discovered but lead on to a continuation of others is demonstrated by the fact that a current of air puts in from the west so strong that the work cannot be prosecuted with stopping up the opening. This volume of air is perfectly pure, and comes in with a rushing, roaring noise, resembling the rumbling of distant thunder. As soon as the proper arrangements can be made, we understand that the work of drainage will be commenced, and continued until a thorough survey is made of the whole range. It is quite probable that some new and striking natural wonder will be developed.

FRESH STARTS.

As it is human to err, or to think that we have erred, so it is human to wish to repair real or fancied errors. And, like all natural impulses, the desire to start afresh may, under certain circumstances—such as the suffering produced by misconduct, or the higher tone of mind produced by education, by the discipline of study, and by conversation with noble natures—rise and swell into a passionate, irresistible longing. In the domain of politics—that is to say, when this impulse acts upon men aggregated in society—it is called the revolutionary or reforming spirit. In the domain of ethics, when it acts upon men severally, it is called the spirit of self-improvement. And in either case it is one of the most valuable stimulants and restoratives that human nature exhibits. It is to the spiritual and intellectual life pretty much what chloride of sodium is to the physical life. It is the salt of the social and moral world. The nation or the man that does not feel this desire must either be in a morbid state of self-satisfaction or in the exhaustion of despair. So long as there is a healthful energy, whether of conscience or of hope, there must be a desire to begin again. Our own national condition for about fifteen years after the Peace of 1815 was very much a condition of morbid self-satisfaction.

We were satisfied with our military organisation, with our government of our dependencies, with our foreign relations, with our domestic institutions, with our monopoly of commerce, with our manufacturing supremacy, and, in short, with the absolute and final unimpeachability of everything British. But, happily, we are as a race too inquisitive and energetic to remain long in any such state of political stagnation. And besides, we have received a series of rude though not ruinous shocks, which have gradually restored us to our normal and healthful condition of dissatisfaction. The national conscience has become sensitive once more, and the national mind is being weaned from a worship of what is, to a longing for what might be.

Of course we cannot attempt here to delineate all the outlines of the philosophy of fresh starts, or to trace even its principal effects upon human conduct. But a few remarks upon one or two of its phases may be suggestive. There are many practical difficulties that encumber the use of this capacity of starting afresh, and the impulse may, of course, like all others, be abused.

It is, for example, no slight difficulty, both for men and for States, to know when to check and when to indulge the wish to begin anew. Some States, like some men, allow this natural desire to degenerate into a merely idle love of transformation. They cannot continue long upon any one line of action. They give no situation and no institution a fair trial. They are always in the throes of abortive innovation. Some new thing in them is ever coming to the birth, but is strangled or abandoned as soon as born. The men of this class are those of whom it is proverbially said that they "cannot let well alone;" and that they "don't know on which side their bread is buttered." Their history is nothing but a catalogue of futile fresh starts. Yet, wretched as this extreme is, it is on the whole less pitiable and less pestilential than the opposite fault. There are some people, and some political bodies, that are always perfectly content with their condition, however unsatisfactory it may appear to the lookers on. Their customs are all "time-honoured," their institutions "hallowed by immemorial usage." All their geese are swans. They carry, as Catullus says, all their faults in the back knapsack. They revel in a fool's paradise. And the worst of it is that these people are not only a curse to themselves, but they are an intolerable nuisance to others. They have a lynx eye for the faults in the front knapsack, and they consider

that their own consciousness of perfection gives them a right to lecture the rest of mankind.

Even those who have the good sense, the humility, and the moderation which will enable them to judge aright when to repress and when to stimulate their desire for a fresh start, sometimes fail in ability to turn the aspiration to practical use. Some fall from want of nerve. It is very easy to prescribe heroic remedies to others. It is not so easy to apply them to oneself. To lay the axe to the root of one's past, to lop off its biggest branches, to quit one's profession or one's country, to forsake one's family or one's friends, to abandon all the ties and associations which have intertwined themselves with one's heart-strings—some of these sacrifices, or all of them, are often necessary to secure a real fresh start. But many are foiled by the magnitude of such a task, and allow their growing aspiration for a new life to run to seed in a mere fruitless sighing after the annihilation of the past, or waste their breath in empty aspirations. Others, again, fall from ignorance of the art of forgetting. They have forsaken their former faults, but they are overwhelmed with the burden of their remembrance. Instead of using the memory of their mistakes as a beacon to save them from fresh rocks ahead, they are blinded and stupefied by fixing their gaze too closely and exclusively on its glare. The past fascinates them and prevents their making hearty efforts for the future. And, lastly, for those masochistic minds which can struggle successfully through all these outer anarcs, which know when they ought to start afresh and dare to do it, and which can move the huge engine of remorse without letting it crush them, there remains the supreme difficulty of determining precisely how much alteration of physical circumstances is requisite in their special case. To hit the happy mean between too much and too little undoing is the ultimate perplexity of penitents, of reformers, and of all who are trying to secure for themselves, or for their fellow-men, a fair fresh start.

FACETIÆ.

PIPING TIMES.—An old woman lately fell off a house in Limerick as she was sweeping the gutter. On being taken up, she applied her hand to her pocket, with the romantic observation, "Musha, I wonder is the pipe broke?"

A PREFERENCE.—At a party given by a great banker, a lady wit pointed out to her companion, also a banker, the wife of the host, remarking: "What a splendid creature! She ought to be a countess!" Oh, yes; beautiful enough and clever enough," was the reply; "but perhaps she prefers to be a dis-countess."

EVERY WORD.—A celebrated divine, who prided himself upon the originality of his sermons, was once told, jocularly, that a sermon he had preached was excellent. "But," said the wag who told him, "I had previously read every word of it in a book I have at home." The astonished clergyman begged for a sight of the volume. "Oh, I have no doubt you have the same book in your library; it is Johnson's Dictionary."

FEARS.

Farmer Snag.—"Look at that now, Billy Skinner, that pear weighs a pound of it weighs an ounce. Your father don't raise no sich pears as that, eh?"

Billy Skinner.—"Well, he do, he raised a pair this summer as weighs more'n four pound."

Farmer Snag.—"No, he didn't."

Billy Skinner.—"I say he did."

Farmer Snag.—"What sort of pear was it?"

Billy Skinner.—"Well, it might be a pair o' chickens! Wh-coop!!"

A CURIOUS FACT.

Truth is stranger than fiction. A farmer who was astonished at the backwardness of his potato crop, had the ground examined by a most experienced judge.

It was discovered that the potatoes were short-sighted, and couldn't see their way through the soil. After dressing the ground with a liberal supply of spectacles, our friend was rewarded by seeing the tubers growing like winking.

LEAVE.—When Madge was a little girl, her father found her chubby little hands full of the blossoms of a beautiful tea-rose on which he had bestowed great care. "My dear," he said, "didn't I tell you not to pick one of those flowers without leave?" "Yes, papa," said Madge innocently, "but all these had leaves."

First Boy.—"What's your hurry, Bob, at such an hour?" **Second Boy.**—"Never mind, don't bother me. Doctor prescribed for Aunt Nancy to walk a mile every night before going to bed, and because Cousin Julia is at the house, she hasn't got time to do it. So I'm doing it for her."

GRANDFATHER BEFOGGED.—A mischievous boy, having got possession of his grandfather's spec-

tacles, privately took out the glasses, and when the old gentleman put them on, finding that he could not see, exclaimed, "Mersey on me, I've lost my sight!" But thinking the impediment to vision might be the dirtiness of the glasses, he took them off to wipe them, when, not feeling them, he, still more frightened, cried out, "Why, I've lost my feeling, too!"

FACTS ABOUT LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

A woman loves twice. Once when she doesn't know it, and once when she does.

Beware of ugly men; their ugliness is often a disguise which helps them easier to carry on the siege.

I don't know which would offend some women most—for a man to tell them he loved them, or not to tell them so.

The marriage state is like a besieged city; those outside want to get in, and those inside want to get out.

There is one capital receipt for a happy marriage; of which the principal ingredients are, a deaf husband and a blind wife.

A man may always find some woman foolish enough to love him, and sometimes one foolish enough even to admire him.

Some married people are like children with a slice of bread and butter and sugar; they begin with the sugar.

A FINE specimen of Goldsmith's art.—"She St ops to Conquer."

WHY may we conclude that a man fond of solitude is in pecuniary difficulties?—Because he is always trying to get alone (a loan).

WHY do horses drag carts?—Because the wheels are tired.

WHEN is a policeman like a clock?—When he strikes one.—Will-o'-the-Wisp.

CIRCULAR NOTES.

The Premier and his colleagues, discovering how much they are misunderstood by the nation, have rushed into print, and written to the newspapers, the common resource of incapables who desire to establish themselves, if possible, by words, instead of deeds. We are much afraid that their letters will satisfy none save the ignorant. The Premier, writing to Greenwich, declines to meet his constituents, by pleading pressure of business. The delicacy and self-denying character of this refusal will be the better appreciated when the peculiar welcome of the Woolwich and Deptford voters comes to be considered. The Chancellor of the Exchequer writes, with sad bungling logic, to explain and justify, if he can, the forthcoming extortion of a tax on anticipated incomes. These Ministerial communications are evidently offered to the public as letters of credit; their signatures and endorsements being considered sufficient security, even before their promises are made valid—the writers trusting that their bad paper will be discounted, honoured, and taken up in time to meet their necessities. It is far from probable, however, that they will be accepted, even at their figurative value. The bills are worthless; they must be classed as broker's exchanges, for raising the wind, and rigging the market.—Will-o'-the-Wisp.

A CONCEITED fellow, on being asked by his mother why he grew such thick moustaches, replied, "To keep the ladies away from my lips!" Did he call chaps ladies?—Judy.

A CLOCK IS LIKE A MAN.—It has two hands, a face, an inside, and outside. Sometimes the hands point to the truth—but it is not ashamed to show its face when they don't! It is a useful bit of machinery—so is man! It often gets out of order—so does man! It is often wound up—so is man! It strikes—so does man! It is not always to be relied on—no more is man! It is hung up in Newgate—so is man!—Judy.

NO WONDER.—The young lady who "wished she was a bird," changed her mind after dinner on Christmas Day, when she saw how dreadfully little was left of the turkey.—Judy.

NEWS reaches us from America that great excitement has been caused in the town of Wabash, in Indiana, by a resolution to enforce the Sunday law. Men, women, and children have been indicted for fishing, sewing, knitting, and blacking boots on that day. But we understand there is no truth in the report that eating and drinking is to be disallowed, and that babies are to be denied the luxury of crying. This is, indeed, an oversight and a concession.—Tomahawk.

A "BALLET GIRL," wrote, the other day, to the Times, to protest strongly against the cruelty inflicted on her order by managers, who regard those who compose it as so much machinery. She, moreover, hinted that many accidents occurred that were hushed up. This is very likely, as no man, who has a reputation in humanity to support, would care to wash such dirty linen as this in public. By the way, the allusion to linen, in connection with this subject, is happy. Ballet girls, now-a-days, are treated, it seems, very much after the fashion of

linen. Both are carefully "got up," but there is this radical difference between them: unlike linen, the ballet girl is ironed first and mangled afterwards.

Tomahawk.
PRINCE NAPOLEON has sent his poor little son to a small school in Paris, where he is to be fed on dry bread and kept to work ten hours a day! The child is seven years old! Surely this is a case in which the Emperor might exercise a little personal power on behalf of his youthful first cousin once removed. His Majesty should order Prince Napoleon to find some other means of purchasing popularity than at the expense of his poor little son. His Imperial Highness was not (if report is to be believed) very terrible at the head of his Infantry in the Crimea, why then should he prove such a Tartar now that his Infantry is in Paris?—*Tomahawk.*

EXPERIENTIA DOCT.
Master George (whispers): "I say, Kitty! Has mamma been telling you she'd give you 'a lovely spoonful of delicious currant jelly, oh, so nice, so very nice'?"

Miss Kitty: "Esa! Cullen' jelly! Oh, so nî, so welly nî!"

Master George: "Then don't take it!"—*Punch.*

NEGRO ARITHMETIC.
"Julius, s'pose dere are six chicken in a coop, and de man sells tree, how many are dere left?"

"What time ob day was it?"

"What time ob day was it? Why, what hab dat to do wid de case?"

"A good deal, honey. If it war arter dark, dar would be none left; dat is, if you happened to come along dat way."

"Look here, niggah, jest you stop dem personalities."

SCIENTIFIC GOSSIP.—The Botanical Gardens in the Regent's Park have recently received most valuable additions in a pair of boot-trees and a fine ram-shrub. The grand climacteric is now in full perfection, and the overland Roof spreads rapidly. The railway "plant" continues to be a great attraction. Branches of the aristocracy are frequently found in the Gardens in the summer months, with many sprigs and youthful scions of nobility.—*Punch's Almanack, 1870.*

DEFLOWERING THE PARKS.—Ayrton is going to root-up the park flower-beds. Suppose he kept the nation's flowers of rhododendron in the park, and relieved us, instead, of his own flowers of rhetoric in Parliament!—*Punch.*

"POSITIVISM."
Mamma is positive she left her keys on the drawing-room table only ten minutes ago. (They are in her pocket.)

Papa is positive there was at least half a bottle of sherry in the decanter at luncheon. (Two glasses and a half.)

Georgina is positive Ernest was talking to that odious Kate Hoversingham, at Mrs. Thurgarton's party, for full three-quarters of an hour. (Ten minutes.)

Eleanor is positive she has not a single dress fit to wear at Mrs. Dudley Tankerville's lawn party. (Four, at least.)

And Elizabeth (nursery-maid) is positive she did not stop talking to her "cousin" more than ten minutes when she was out with Master Arthur in the park. (Three-quarters of an hour.)—*Punch's Almanack, 1870.*

LOVE IN THE PAINT-BOX.—A remarkable discovery has been made in colours. Like plants and triangles, they are found to be susceptible to the tender passion. Our authority for this assertion is the following unblushing statement:—"Blue is the coldest and most retiring of all colours; its complementary, orange, the warmest and most advancing." Oh, prudish blue! oh, forward orange!—*Punch's Almanack, 1870.*

It was formerly a law in Germany that a female condemned to capital punishment should be saved if any man would marry her. A young girl of Vienna was on the point of being executed, when her youth and beauty made a great impression upon the heart of one of the spectators, who was a Neapolitan, but excessively ugly. Struck with her charms, he determined to save her, and running immediately to the place of execution, declared his intention to marry the girl, and demanded her pardon, which was granted on condition that the girl was not averse to the match. The Neapolitan then gallantly told the girl he was a gentleman of some property, and wished that he was a king. "Alas, sir," said she, "I am fully sensible of your affection and generosity, but I am not mistress over my own heart, and I cannot belie my sentiments. I prefer death rather than marry such an ugly fellow as you!"

THE DRAMA.—If the condition of English dramatic literature is unsatisfactory as regards quality, in quantity at least it appears to make some amends. No less than 154 new pieces were produced in London last year, distributed among 34 theatres and other places of entertainment. To these, if we

add 83 pieces produced in provincial theatres, we have a total of 237, or not very much less than 5 a week. There may be some interest in seeing to what classes these pieces belong. Drama is of course the most prolific. Of the 154 pieces produced in London 72 belong to this class, while 21 were barlesques or extravaganzas, 16 were comedies, 7 comediettas, 15 farces, 4 operettas, 2 comic operas, and 17 pantomimes. These classifications are of course open to question, it being difficult to determine the exact limits between farce and "farical comedy," comedietta and comedy, barlesque and farical extravaganzas, comic opera and musical folly.

THE WAKING INFANT.

I GAZED upon its laughing eyes,
That mocked the sapphire's blue,
Its cheek rich-red as ruby-dyes,
Its lips of coral hue,
And saw its brow more fair than snow,
Ere it hath caught a taint below.
I viewed it on the couch of rest,
With locks of curly grace;
Heaved soft as fountain-wave its breast,
And from its seraph face
Glanced the sweet brightness of a dream,
Like sunshine from a summer stream.
It woke, and stretched its rosy arms,
As asking a caress
From her who watched its slumbering charms—
Oh, task of blessedness!
'E'en like an angel or a dove,
To bend o'er all we prize and love.
The mother raised it on her knee,
And danced her cherub boy;
How then burst forth its artless glee,
All trembling as with joy.
Lips open, dimples on each cheek,
And eyes that, sparkling, seemed to speak.
Sweet thing of innocence! I sighed,
How lovely now art thou!
Pure as a pearl in ocean's tide,
Or dew on morning's brow:
Oh, happy age! Oh, golden prime!
Unfelt a care, unknown a crime.

N. M.

GEMS.

BE not content with high resolves; rather be content with little doing.

As long as you live, seek to learn; do not presume that old age will bring wisdom.

CALUMNY is like the wasp that teases, and against which you must not attempt to defend yourself unless you are certain to destroy it; otherwise it returns to the charge more furious than ever.

It is chiefly in the warm, bright period of middle life that we live for others; like the sun, whose morning and evening rays pass over the object which are illuminated by its midday beams.

ARE you stepping upon the threshold of life? Secure for yourself a good moral character. Without integrity you can never rise to distinction and honour.

THE most gentle authority will sometimes frown without reason, and the most cheerful submission will sometimes murmur without cause; and such is the law of our imperfect nature, that we must either command or obey.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

KEEPING GRAPES.—Take a light tea-chest, place a newspaper on the bottom, then a single layer of grapes (picking out carefully all unsound fruit) then another paper and layer of grapes, and so on till the box is filled. Place them in an airy, cool, dry room—and should the temperature at any time go much below freezing, cover with blankets.

A NEW WHITEWASH FOR WALLS.—Soak one-fourth of a pound of glue over-night in tepid water. The next day put it into a tin vessel with a quart of water, set the vessel in a kettle of water over the fire, keep it there till it boils, and then stir until the glue is dissolved. Next put from six to eight pounds of Paris white into another vessel, add hot water, and stir until it has the appearance of milk of lime. Add the sizing, stir well, and apply in the ordinary way while still warm. "Paris white" is sulphate of baryta, and may be bought cheaply.

THE RED RIVER INSURRECTION.—The Red River insurgents have issued a long declaration of independence, in which they state that hitherto the people of Rupert's Land have respected the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company, though the government of that company was far from answering to

their wants; but that having now been abandoned by it and transferred to a strange Power, they consider themselves free from all allegiance to their former rulers. They refuse to recognise the authority of Canada, and declare that they will continue to oppose it. They moreover proclaim, in the name of the people of Rupert's Land, and the North-West territory, that they have established a provisional government, which they hold to be the only lawful authority existing in the country, and announce that they are ready to enter into such negotiations with Canada as may be favourable to the good government and prosperity of the people.

STATISTICS.

COLONIAL WOOL.—The import of colonial wool into Great Britain during the past year showed an increase of 1,138 bales over the total of 1868, and the excess would have been larger but for the loss at sea of four vessels, with about 13,000 bales. The importation from all our colonies in 1869 was 634,544 bales, against 633,406 bales in 1868, 541,655 in 1867, 455,049 in 1866, 432,975 in 1865, and 372,831 bales in 1864. Of the total import last year the proportion supplied by each colony is given as follows:—New South Wales and Queensland, 120,544 bales; Victoria, 206,183 bales; South Australia, 66,097 bales; Western Australia, 4,861 bales; Tasmania, 17,362 bales; New Zealand, 85,329 bales; and Cape of Good Hope, 134,163 bales.

BEETROOT SUGAR.—The annual value of the raw sugar made from beetroot in France now exceeds five millions sterling. The total number of beetroot sugar factories on the Continent now amounts to more than 1,800, turning out the enormous quantity of 611,000 tons of sugar per season. In the year ending 1867 no less than 55,000 tons of beetroot sugar were imported into the United Kingdom; or, in other words, we paid Continental makers 1,600,000*l.* for a commodity, which, it is now believed, we could just as well have produced ourselves. Beetroot sugar is successfully competing with cane sugar in the London and other English markets; and probably a remission of the Customs and Excise duties would have no other effect than to increase the consumption of beetroot sugar, and render its manufacture more profitable than it already is.

MISCELLANEOUS.

DURING last year 192 persons were killed by horses and vehicles in the streets of London.

The King of Prussia has just caused a medal to be struck, to commemorate the war of 1866.

A GERMAN astronomer says that we are soon to have another moon, and that it will be nearer the earth than our present satellite.

The Madrid Gazette publishes the law voted by the Cortes fixing the number of the Spanish Army at 80,000 men.

It is intended to remove the educational part of the Royal Naval College at Portsmouth to Greenwich, where officers will find ample room and other conveniences to pursue their studies.

The Southampton Corporation have given a piece of land for the erection of a ragged school. There is already one ragged school in the town, which is educating about 600 poor children.

An International Exhibition of home and foreign products of art and industry is to be opened in the city of Cordova, in the Argentine Republic, on the 15th of October next.

BUSINESS IN THE DIVORCE COURT.—As many as 171 cases appear in the list of this court for the term commenced on the 4th inst., besides 13 standing over by consent. Of 171 there were 134 to be tried without juries.

An exhibition of animals fit for food will be held on the 14th February in the Palace of Industry in the Champs Elysees. There will also be an exhibition of poultry, grain, roots, cheese, butter, and agricultural instruments.

The Cubans manifest their admiration for opera artistes in an odd way. Instead of throwing bouquets on the stage, they throw a young negro covered with bracelets of gold and jewellery. The black is, in fact, the favourite's jewel-casket.

A CORRESPONDENT in Paris, with reference to the style of ladies' dress in that city, states that long trains have been abandoned, and describes a new fashion called "la robe ronde," which consists of a gown made quite plain, about a yard too long before and behind.

We understand that the Benchers of the Middle Temple have been appealed to with reference to the conduct of one of the members of the inn in connection with the Overend and Gurney prosecution. Dr. Thom has presented a petition in which, however, he desires the mildest possible form of punishment may be inflicted, due regard being paid to the nature of the complaint which he prefers.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALFRED LEWIS.—We do not undertake to return rejected manuscripts.

M. J. W.—Apply lemon-juice freely, and wear kid gloves as much as possible.

P. D. OLIVER AND LEO SHORT.—There is a want of power and sustained effort in the sonnets. Here and there a good line may be found, but, considered as a whole, they are very feeble productions.

T. M. S.—Medical opinion is decidedly against the intermarriage of first cousins, however healthy the individuals may be. It is, however, incorrect to say that the offspring of such a marriage would be necessarily idiotic.

AN OLD SOLDIER.—The judgment of the officer in command is doubtless correct upon the question of recruits sent to Deal. At all events, it is out of order to question that judgment, upon so slender a reason as the mere opinion of one individual.

X. Y. Z.—Consult the "London Directory." Under the list of trades, you will find many firms of the description alluded to. Select the one you may consider most suitable for you, and make a personal application. The payment of a premium will facilitate matters.

A. B. D.—We are not aware that any definite meaning is attached to such a present. It is, however, of such a nature that it could only be adopted by a very old and sincere friend. For a mere acquaintance to offer such a gift, would, we think, be an act of presumption and rudeness.

J. W. F. R.—The Act of Parliament makes no distinction between a traveller on business and a traveller on pleasure. Therefore an innkeeper may supply refreshment to a traveller at any hour of the Sunday. There must, however, be no trick or collusion. The proceeding must be in perfect good faith.

W. W.—The origin of the title, cardinal, is contested. Lucius Ferraris, a good authority, says the title was invented by Pope Sylvester I; for the first mention of cardinals is found in the decrees of the Roman Council held soon after the conversion of the Emperor Constantine. Sylvester himself being present. The word is defined from *cardo*, a hinge.

YOUNG SAILOR.—As a rule the intestate's freehold property descends to his eldest son, to the exclusion of everyone else. But this rule may be modified. If the land be in Kent all the sons would take equally, by the custom of Gavelkind; or if the property be in Stafford, the youngest son is heir, according to the tenure in Borough English.

JARDINIERE.—We do not think that you could find any more desirable evergreen than the *arbutus*, or *locust-tree*. It is beautiful, vigorous, fresh, and graceful, with an abundance of light-green foliage. It is a native of the barren but warm regions of the South of Europe, growing in arid, burnt-up places, where its very existence is a marvel. The *locust-tree* is, indeed, a perfect emblem of evergreen vegetation.

EDITH AND GRACE.—Edith is right, and Grace therefore is wrong. The olive trees in the South of France are infinitely inferior to the olive trees of the district beyond Mentone. The former are comparatively miserable dwarfish shrubs; but in what may be called the Mentonian amphitheatre, the olive-trees that cover the lower hills and the base of the higher ones to a height of 2,000 feet above the sea, grow as fruit trees, and present an appearance of dignity and grandeur.

LIRIA.—Algeria is not a climate which we would recommend for persons suffering under the ordinary forms of consumption, chronic bronchitis, or bronchitic asthma. The climate is, no doubt, suitable in some exceptional cases of chest disease, in which a mild moist air is required; but this can be obtained nearer home, and we think you had better not go to Algiers. Obviously, however, you should consult a physician.

ROUND THE WORLD.—The age of recruits for the navy is limited from fourteen and a half to sixteen years, and any candidate whose age is under or beyond these limits is dismissed without further inquiry. If you are determined "to try your luck to get Round the World" as a sailor, your age, therefore, would not be an impediment; and as you live in the London district, "try your luck," as you phrase it, by applying in the first instance to the officer in command of the Fishguard frigate, at Woolwich.

A. L. Y.—Doctors proverbially differ; and, as many of the most eminent of them are at issue as to whether it is or is not advisable to administer alcohol to patients, we cannot decide the point. It is probably right to do so in some cases, and wrong in others. You are certainly in error in scolding the popular notion that is right "to feed a fever;" the notion, as you call it, is perfectly

reasonable, and rests on a sound psychological basis. In fevers, when the temperature of the system is raised only six degrees above the normal standing, there is an excessive amount of tissue or change going on in the body, and which, according to physiologists, is equivalent during one day to the physical exhaustion that would ensue if a person in good health had walked fifty miles. It is evident, therefore, that a great amount of nutriment is needed; and this is, in fact, the reason why people "feed a fever."

AMOS HADD.—I. We believe Mr. Wilde's electric light was first exhibited before the Royal Society at Burlington House early in 1847. 2. "Waves of sound" (your use of the term is perfectly correct) go only 377 yards in a second, while the earth travels eighteen and a third miles, and light ten thousand times faster than that. Electricity (which is certainly not a fluid, but is probably another kind of vibration of the solid atoms of bodies) traverses a wire about half as fast again as light.

YOUNG ARTILLERIST.—If our memory serves us correctly, the whole amount of shot and shell thrown into Sebastopol during the siege was 253,042 rounds from the English batteries alone, and during the last two days of bombardment 24,732 rounds. We think an official return was published by the Queen's Printers, which you had better consult for the other information you require. You will probably find it in the military library at Woolwich.

SIR ARCHIBALD.—"Visible speech" is by no means a figure of speech, as you seem to imagine; Mr. Bell, of Edinburgh, having invented an alphabet of thirty signs, by means of which, and their various combinations, it is alleged, it is possible to represent every sound of which the human voice is capable. Rendering words into signs would consequently be pretty much the same thing as making one tongue of all the languages of the earth, since the signs would be readily and universally understood. It would also effect an immense facility in telegraphing.

A READER OF "LES MISÉRABLES."—Victor Hugo has certainly not drawn upon his imagination for the monstrous fish which he calls the "sea-devil." The devil-fish does actually exist; it is one of the largest and most singular that inhabit the great deep, but is peculiar, we believe, to the Mediterranean; and the monstrous creature really has a huge stomach and mouth all in one, in front of its misshapen head. Specimens have been caught but very rarely. You write very well.

SONG.

They say I am no faithful swain,
Because I do not fold my arms.
And gaze and sigh, and gaze again,
And hate my fair one's fatal charms.
I cannot weep, I cannot sigh,
My fair one's heart laughs in her eye;
I cannot weep like weepers weep,
My fair one's step is free and light.

When fix'd in memory's mirror dwells
Some dear-loved form to fleet no more,
Transform'd by Arrest terrestrial smiles,
We watch the likeness we adore.
Then, ah! who would not love most true?
Who would not be in love with you?
So he might learn the bliss of heart
Which waits on those who bliss impart,
Might learn through smiles and tears to shine,
Like angels, and like Caroline! J. K.

JULIAN VILLAROSA.—The orange-trees in tubs that were placed in Trafalgar Square are only moderately fair specimens of the orange-tree, and were much too diminutive to produce any material effect in relieving the "stoniness" of their surroundings in that "finest site in Europe." When the weather is dry, and the sky is covered with clouds, which arrest terrestrial radiation, the fruit of the orange-tree will bear seven degrees below the freezing point without injury, and orange-trees themselves are only killed by eleven degrees of frost.

MR. YIP.—All the symptoms you describe, viz., the sudden pain in the throat and ears, followed by shivering, general uneasiness, constriction of the chest, sneezing, and entire prostration, great increase of bodily temperature, with a tendency to light-headedness—are undoubtedly indicative of an attack of influenza. The following is an excellent remedy: Boil lemoned and feet tea, with an aperient pill or ammonia draught, the first day; next morning, a five-grain dose of quinine, and half-a-pint of champagne at night. If necessary, repeat the process, and you will get rid of your unpleasant visitor.

ROSAMOND WILCHESTER.—At eighteen you would certainly not be "over young to marry;" but we should doubt the wisdom of doing so in your case, as you know so little of your admirer, or his position. Don't forget the adage, "Marry in haste, repent at leisure;" and every marriage, we may add, is like the marriage of the Doge of Venice with the Adriatic Sea—he knows not what he may be taking, treasures, pearls, monsters, sudden tempests. You are in nearly the same position.

A YOUNG SAILOR.—We thought to have said our last word respecting the Suez Canal, but will answer your questions, nevertheless. 1. The fear of the canal drying up by evaporation is quite chimerical. 2. Its filling up by shifting sands is only a possible danger, much exaggerated. 3. The entire length of the canal is 100 miles, of which 57 are through lakes which have existed as basins for 2,000 years without being filled with sand, and the remainder of its length would be entirely kept clear by dredging when required. As to its commercial prospects, we have no sufficient data for judging at present. Your handwriting is very good indeed.

JULIANA.—The business of diamond-cutting is confined almost exclusively to Amsterdam, and is wholly in the hands of Jews, who employ about 10,000 workmen. In the "rose" pattern the surface is cut into twenty-four little facets, while the base is polished and remains a plane. In the "brilliant" pattern, which is the most perfect and latest (it was invented only in the reign of George I.) the diamond is made to assume the form of a double cone, with a cover and point and the upper end truncated. In the operation of cutting the rough

stones lose from thirty to fifty per cent. Your handwriting is very nice indeed.

NEW MARKET LAD asks to be informed of the derivation of the word, "sausage." The earliest authority for the use of the word is given in a work printed in 1580, in which it is called "a pudding called a sausage." Todd also says that the contents are "stuffed into skins, and sometimes only rolled in flour," which is, no doubt, correct, as in those days makers of sausages were not all likely to have had skin to put them in. But these savoury edibles were made long before 1580, and were called "weasels," whose long, thin bodies they resemble. A recipe for making these "weasels" is given in a curious work printed in 1450, as follows: First, grind pork, temper it with eggs and powder of pepper and canel; close it in a capon's neck or a pig's paunch (or gut), roast it well, and then varnish it with batter of eggs and flour, to serve in hall or else in bower. The mysterious Scotch concoction called "Haggis" was made in those days, too; this being the receipt given in the same old work for making it: "Sheeps' hearts, kidneys, and lungs were boiled, chopped up with parsley, hyssop, savory, suet, pepper, and eggs, with mint, thyme, and sage also in winter; then boiled again and sprinkled with salt."

LOUISE, nineteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, and domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-one, dark, good looking, fond of home, and in easy circumstances.

GRACE G., nineteen, medium height, fair complexion. Respondent must be about twenty-one, tall, dark, and good looking. A clerk preferred.

F. L. T. (a widower, in the enjoyment of an independence). Respondent should be about forty, and possess a small income.

LIEBIG ROSE, nineteen, middle height, fair, and loving. Respondent must be dark, and able to keep a wife. Wishes to exchange cards.

FLORENCE GERALDINE and LILIAN ESTELLE (two cousins).—Florence, twenty-one, a brunette, dark curling hair, handsome, accomplished, domesticated, and has 600*l.* a year. "Lilian," nineteen, fair curling hair, good tempered, and domesticated; can speak French, draw, and play the piano. Both are of medium height.

FANNY, fair, good tempered, and fond of home. Respondent must be dark, about twenty-six, and steady.

VIOLIER, twenty-four, medium height, brown hair and eyes, fair skin, good figure, fond of home, and affectionate, with a few hundred pounds. Respondent must have sound principles, be good tempered, fond of home, affectionate, and kind hearted.

PANSY and DAISY (two friends).—Pansy, brown hair, blue eyes, fair, pretty, domesticated, and loving. Respondent must be a sailor, tall, dark, good looking, and of a cheerful and loving disposition. "Daisy," black hair and eyes, fair complexion, pretty, musical, and loving. Respondent must be tall, handsome, loving, and fond of home.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

MAUD would like to receive the *cartes de visite* of the gentlemen who responded to her in No. 348.

S. WILKINSON writes to say that the communication to which his name is attached in No. 343 is withdrawn.

EDITH LISSENDON wishes "H. J. R." to forward his *cartes de visite*, on the receipt of which she will enclose her own.

FRANKLIN is responded to by—"F. L. D." who is fair, tall, and pretty; and—"P. L." twenty, dark brown hair and eyes, and domesticated. Wishes to exchange cards.

TOM BOWLING by—"Nelly Russell," twenty, middle height, fair, and fond of sailors. Wishes for cards. JOSIAH WHITE by—"Flora." She is middle aged, dark, and domesticated. In addition to a yearly income, she has a small capital wherewith to commence business.

RALPH and HARRY by—"Violet and Lilian" (sisters). "Violet," nineteen, middle height, loving, dark, and handsome. Would like to correspond with "Ralph." "Lilian," seventeen, not quite middle height, fair, light brown hair, and large blue eyes. Would like to correspond with "Harry." These young ladies are orphans, and each enjoys an income of 300*l.* a year.

MAUD by—"Ralph" (a gentleman), twenty-five, medium height, fair, with whiskers and moustache, fond of music, and affectionate. Would like to exchange addresses and cards.

DAISY by—"Augustus" (a gentleman), twenty-four, 5ft. 5in., fair, affectionate, and fond of music. Would like to exchange cards.

NELLIE by—"S. E. R." twenty-four, dark, curly hair, blue eyes, and domesticated. Wishes to exchange cards. A. G. R. by—"Nellie," 5ft. 4in., handsome, fair, good tempered, and domesticated.

CAMILLA ADELINA by—"R. H." (a gentleman), twenty-five, good looking, fair, affectionate, and fond of home. Would like to exchange *cartes de visite*.

F. K. by—"Harriet R." (a farmer's daughter). She is healthy, domesticated, and nice looking. Wishes for "P. K.'s" cards.

J. ALSTON by—"Maude," medium height, fair, blue eyes, and fond of home. Would like to know his profession or trade.

ADA by—"George," twenty-two, 5ft. 10in., dark, good looking, with good expectations; and—"A Young Widower," twenty-four, tall, steady, fond of home, and affectionate.

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Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. XIII. Price ONE PENNY.

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